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# PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

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# Resident Evil 5

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## Welcome



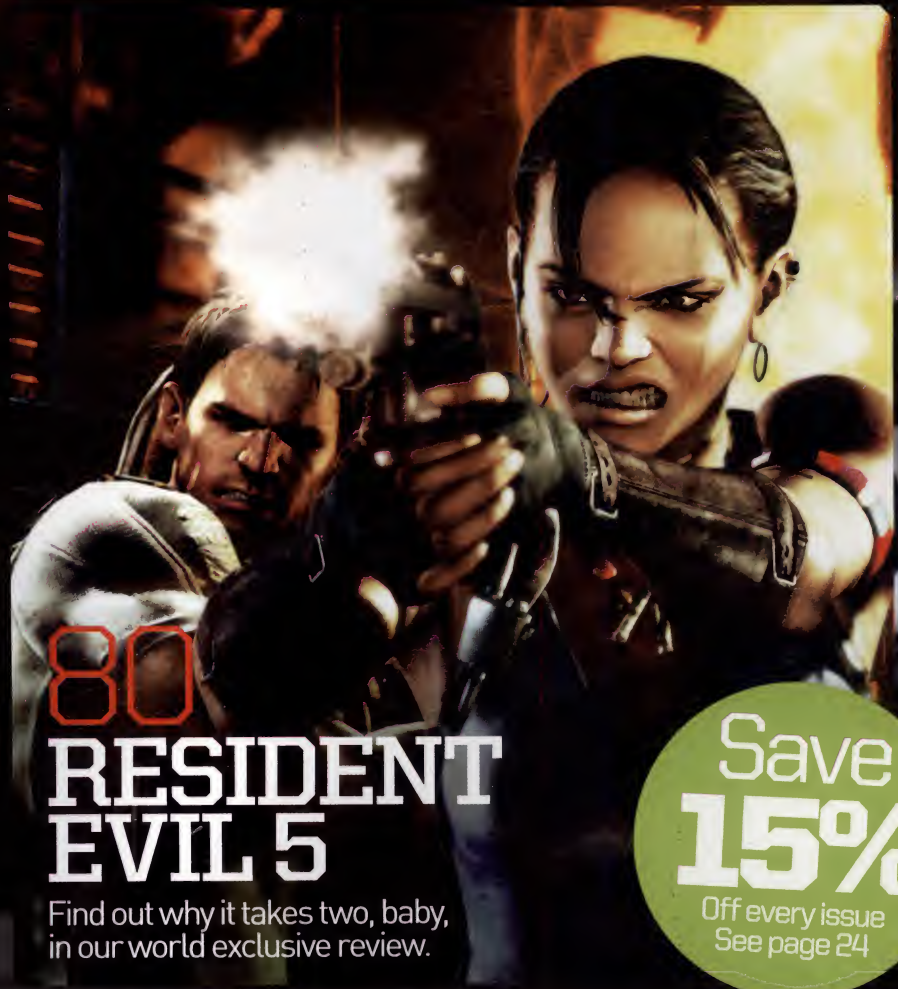
I wonder whether we gamers actually crave innovation, or whether, like surf 'n' turf, it looks a good idea on the menu but less so when it arrives and there's an enormous fishy claw draped over your sirloin steak. (Is it lunch yet?) I mention this because, as our typically clear-eyed review points out, Resident Evil 5 is essentially the same game as its predecessor. There are new features, sure – online co-op, sunshine, colonial guilt – but it *feels* the same. But in this case that means 'brilliant'.

As critics, do we overvalue originality? Do we champion the likes of Mirror's Edge because our palettes have become jaded? Did we punish World At War simply because Modern Warfare was so good? I suspect the answers are no, maybe and duh. As ever, though, I look forward to hearing your views.

The same goes for this month's standout feature on PlayStation Home. We spent an entire day embedded with its citizens, and it got strange, *fast*. Find out what happened on page 58. Next month we'll be trembling at the hi-def feet of Kratos with the first in-depth coverage of God Of War III. That hits on 17 March. I'll count you in.

**Tim Clark**  
Editor-in-chief  
[tim.clark@futurenet.com](mailto:tim.clark@futurenet.com)

## COVER REVIEW



# 80 RESIDENT EVIL 5

Find out why it takes two, baby, in our world exclusive review.

Save  
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See page 24

## FEATURES



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## Who we are...



**Tim Clark**  
Editor-in-chief

Reworked the lyrics of 'Hey Big Spender' to be about Arsene Wenger. Still no signings.

**Game of the month**  
Resident Evil 5  
**Co-op partner**  
John Cusack



**Ben Wilson**  
Deputy editor

Spent the month refusing to drink and growing a beard in a futile attempt to be more like Zangief.

**Game of the month**  
Resistance 2  
**Co-op partner**  
Seann William Scott



**Leon Hurley**  
Commissioning editor

Two days bickering with Tim on Res3 co-up over who needed the Magnum.

**Game of the month**  
Resident Evil 5  
**Co-op partner**  
Han Solo



**Rachel Penny**  
News editor

Her new year's resolution: catch up on DVD box sets of forgotten mid-90s shows. Mission accomplished.

**Game of the month**  
Killzone 2  
**Co-op partner**  
Heston Blumenthal



**Nathan Ditum**  
Reviews editor

OPM's Mr FIFA has begged us not to mention the fact he still plays PES every lunchtime. So we won't.

**Game of the month**  
Home  
**Co-op partner**  
Connie Huq



**Helen Woodey**  
Operations editor

Thought of the day: "If I could check the mag with my arse, think of all the other things I could do with my hands."

**Game of the month**  
Home  
**Co-op partner**  
Hogge from Labyrinth

Write to the team at [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com)

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"This is heaven!" 8/10 - EDGE

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# On your disc

icon on the XMB bar and then select 'DPSM - UK Blu-ray Demo 2009/29'



Birds are singing, flowers are blooming and spring is minutes away. Not that you'll see much of it, because you'll be indoors, playing demos. First up is *Mirror's Edge*, the game that split the critics last year. (Note: we liked it, pretty much everyone else didn't.) Tom Clancy's *Endwar* is also a must play - it's real-time strategising in which you use your voice instead of the Sixaxis to direct your men. Then there's *GTI Club+*, an update of the coin-op racing classic, and *Moto GP 08* for those who like their racing lethal. Plus we've got another 12 essential demos on offer. Hands up who needs sunshine?

Rachel Penny *Agenda editor*



Switch your PS3 on, find the Game

**Mirror's Edge**  
If you spent 2008 under a rock you might have missed Faith's debut, otherwise you'll know this is a revolutionary game. Our demo will teach you the basics of free running as she hurtles across the rooftops of a shining future city.

## This month's exclusive highlights...



**Tom Clancy's Endwar**  
Give your trigger finger the day off in this futuristic battle that's all about using voice commands to issue orders.



**Guitar Hero World Tour**  
Welcome to the school of rock. Learn to sing, strum and drum to tracks like *Livin' On A Prayer* and *Rebel Yell*.



**Moto GP 08**  
Slip into something streamline, hop on a supercharged bike and try your luck on the Mugello circuit as celebrity riders Dani Pedrosa or Nicky Hayden.



**Lego Indiana Jones**  
The action archaeologist gets plastic surgery in this tongue-in-cheek platformer tribute that's mercifully *Crystal Skull* free.



**What if my disc doesn't work?**  
If it definitely doesn't work, send the disc to Disc Returns, OPM, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW and we'll replace it. You can also email questions to [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com).

Also on the disc this month **Playable** *LEGO Batman: The Videogame*, *Motorstorm Pacific Rift*, *GTI Club+*, *NBA 2K9*, *Pro Evolution Soccer 2009*, *Valkyria Chronicles*, *Soulcalibur IV*, *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*, *WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009*, *FIFA 09*, *Fracture* **Video** *Tekken 6*, *Naruto Ultimate Ninja Storm*, *Mirror's Edge*, *Prince Of Persia*





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# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about...

## PS3 trends

Art house is the new action in 2009.

► Page 12

## Dark side

Say goodbye to the evil Obi-Wan.

► Page 14

## PS3 in 3D

Sony's tri-dimensional tech revealed in Vegas.

► Page 15

## Surviving the crunch

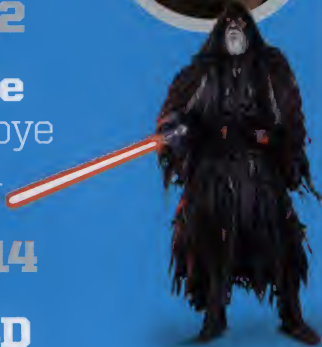
Games vs the recession.

► Page 16

## Debate

Should Hideo Kojima direct MGS5 or not?

► Page 22



# 1

# EA said knock you out!

## New shots and first juicy details on Fight Night Round 4

Bosh! Just in case you had any doubts that Fight Night Round 4 would pound all previous boxing games in the looks department, here's Muhammad Ali leathering Mike Tyson in delicious, sweat-drenched HD. The game is currently in development at EA Canada – who took up the reins when EA Chicago closed in November 2007 – and, crucially, the team insists it plays just as brutally as it looks.

"I know you've heard this before, but we've rebuilt the engine from scratch," says producer Brian Hayes. "Our goal is to create the most realistic boxing experience. The gameplay mechanics and AI have been refined and improved to create a larger variety of styles and strategies you can use to be successful in the ring. Our objectives are to deliver

more variety, excitement and authenticity to gameplay."

### Headed for the top

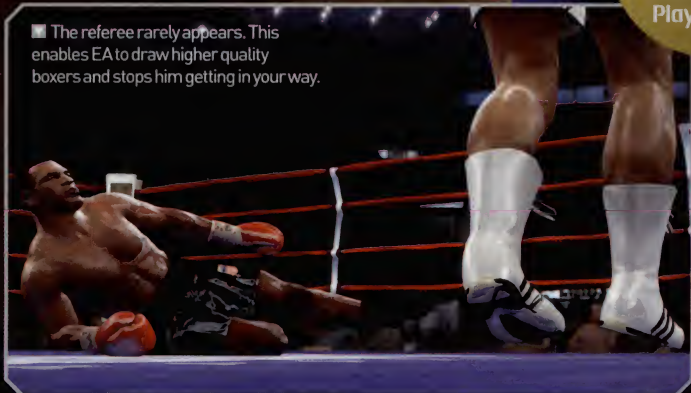
That focus on realism extends to the deepest career mode ever seen in a boxing game according to producer Jeff Atienza. "Everybody on the team is aware of the shortcomings in FNR3's career mode," he admits. "We are working hard to ensure Legacy Mode is a deeper and more authentic experience. It includes new training games, divisional rankings, multiple titles in each division and several other features that you will hear more about soon." Sounds great – and with the roster announced at the end of February, we'll have more next issue.

Fight Night Round 4 will be released in the summer. For more info see [fightnight.easports.com](http://fightnight.easports.com).



■ Grant, Lonsdale and Everlast have all supplied official kit for FNR4.

  
**EXCLUSIVE  
SHOTS**  
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Official Magazine UK



■ The referee rarely appears. This enables EA to draw higher quality boxers and stops him getting in your way.





# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



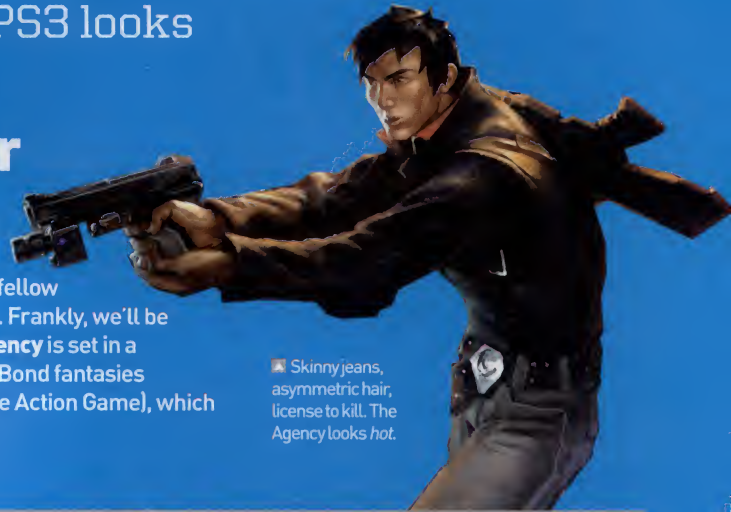
## Hot trends for '09!

We predict this year's big PS3 looks



### Massive multiplayer

Gird your broadband connections, people: 2009 is the year that PS3 takes MMO gaming to the console kids. **DC Universe Online** is stuffed with big name superheroes, and you can decide whether to help the Dark Knight as a fellow costumed crusader, or make your name as an evil villain. Frankly, we'll be deciding on the basis of the uniform. Spy shooter **The Agency** is set in a persistent online world too, enabling you to live out your Bond fantasies without buying a tux. Then there's **MAG** (short for Massive Action Game), which promises 256-player battles. Need. New. Router.



☞ Skinny jeans, asymmetric hair, license to kill. The Agency looks hot.



### Supersize sequels

Yearning for the comforting return of your favourite blockbuster brands? 2009 won't disappoint. The teaser for **Bioshock 2: Sea Of Dreams**

had a grown-up 'little sister' and her toy 'big daddy' staring out to sea - perhaps hinting you'll be playing as one of the little ladies. But is it a sequel, prequel or both?

Meanwhile, **Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2** returns the series to the sure hands of Infinity Ward, so we expect another genre-defining shooter. And Kratos is back in **God Of War III**, which promises to reveal why there are no more myths. Find out more in next month's cover feature.



☞ "Have you got these gloves in a bigger size?" Kratos is going out like that in GOW III.



Bayonetta – the name to drop to reassert your fading hardcore credentials.

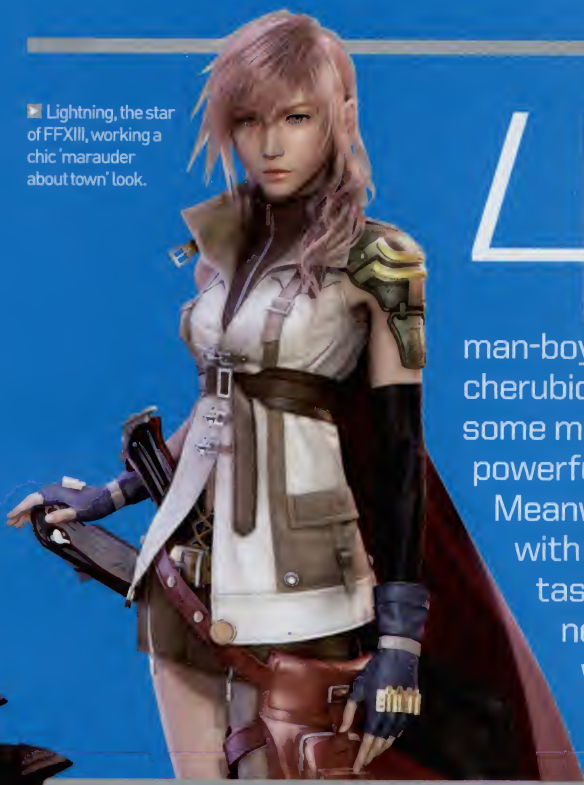
## Arthouse originals

Not all developers will take the safe route through the credit chasm. Rockstar is heading out of Liberty City and arriving in a sepia-toned 1940's Los Angeles courtesy of Aussie-developed crim-sim, **LA Noire**. Meanwhile, **Bayonetta** isn't so much new territory as another planet altogether – it's the action game starring a witch who can kill people with her hair, which turns into a giant dragon, and is almost certainly full of tangles. **Heavy Rain** has a far more conventional story, but the control system and effects are revolutionary. You'll make emotional decisions rather than just run, punch and kick. It also features the most realistic digital actors ever, darling.

Lightning, the star of FFXIII, working a chic 'marauder about town' look.

## 4 Sweeping Japanese epics

Yep, it's all about the intricate storylines, doll-faced love interests and infuriatingly floppy man-boy hair. **White Knight Chronicles** focuses on Lenard, a cherubic teen who can transform into a giant knight thanks to some magical armour. It means he gets super strength and powerful spells, but must spend a small fortune on Brasso. Meanwhile **Final Fantasy XIII** is as complicated as it is pretty, with a woman called Lightning, magical crystals handing out tasks and a floating city called Cocoon. As for **Team Ico's** next masterpiece? No-one knows a thing about it yet, but we'll bet our ironic import T-shirts it will be amazing.



## Movie makeovers

This year, EA takes the mother of all gangster films, whacks some anachronistic body armour on top and mumbles **The Godfather II**. Incredibly, this won't be the only movie tie-in of 2009. You've loved Terminator since Arnie first pulled on his leather jacket, and next-gen technology could finally deliver a game that does the giant murderous manbot justice: **Terminator Salvation** will coincide with the new film. Gearbox's **Aliens: Colonial Marines** might have disappeared off the radar, but the space soldiers and murderous xenomorphs are alive and well. With input from Aliens' original concept artist, Syd Mead, and Battlestar Galactica writers Bradley Thompson and David Weddle on board, this is a movie tie-in to take seriously.





# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



■ Dark Obi-Wan is based on Alec Guinness' original portrayal of the character but turns his robes to rags adorned with dark side artefacts.



3

## Why you'll never get to be Dark Obi-Wan

Star Wars Battlefront III to be reworked by new dev

**Who's making Battlefront III?**  
With Free Rad firmly out of the picture the internet is full of whispers as to who will be taking over development duties. The two contenders are Pandemic, which developed the first two Battlefront games but is now owned by EA, and Rebellion, which created Renegade Squadron on PSP and was already thought to be handling the PS2 version. It's a shame that Free Radical's version won't be made, though, as the footage shows a significant improvement in technology since the disappointing Haze, with detailed environments, classy lighting effects and the ability to take off from a planet's surface and fly into orbit to fight in a massive space battle without a break in the action.

"Stick to the plan, Kenobi." You won't remember that quote from Star Wars, because the Kenobi in question isn't the kindly old grandpa Jedi we know from the original trilogy, but the dark side-tainted Sith lord you see pictured above. The line is delivered by Emperor Palpatine in a recently leaked trailer that showcased Free Radical Design's work on Star Wars Battlefront III. Problem is you'll never get to play it, because the developer lost the rights to the game and has since been placed into administration.

### Path to the dark side

While Free Radical's future remains uncertain (founders David Doak and Steve Ellis have allegedly already formed a new studio called Pumpkin Beach) loads of character art and info

have snuck out online. These concept designs for Dark Obi-Wan portray the character as a wizened, aged Sith whose clothing mirrors the tattered rags of Yoda during his bohemian swamp midget days on Dagobah. The dark side has also corrupted his physical appearance giving him glowing eyes and claw-like talons.

It suggests Free Rad was taking a highly experimental approach to the multiplayer series, rewriting continuity and creating alternate universe storylines. And this presumably with the approval of George Lucas, as such designs would never have made it past the concept stage without an okay from the notoriously protective overlord. It's further backed up by the footage in the leaked video, confirmed by

sources as alpha footage from an internal Free Rad meeting in November last year. The basic capture-the-flag-style multiplayer action from previous games is intact and all the famous settings from the films are present and correct but there are numerous interesting twists. Like an unarmed Jedi using martial arts rather than a lightsaber, a female Sith dual-wielding 'sabers and someone duelling with a Jedi using a metal sword (presumably forged from Phrick or Mandalorian iron - two lightsaber resistant metals). All of which only makes it more of a shame that Free Rad's bold take on the Star Wars universe won't see the light of day.

Check out [starwars.wikia.com](http://starwars.wikia.com) to see what, where and who would have featured in Free Rad's Battlefront III.



4

# PlayStation 3 in 3D!

Sony demos HD 3D gaming in Vegas. We want. Now

**3D is so hot right now**

With Sony, LG, Panasonic and Mitsubishi showing off 3D tech at this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Vegas, plus My Bloody Valentine 3D hitting the multiplexes, you'd be forgiven for thinking 3D is the latest breakthrough. In actuality, boffins have been experimenting with 3D film since 1890.

Imagine playing Killzone 2 with explosions propelling chunks of masonry *out* of the screen and clean over your head. Or instinctively ducking as a trap mechanism sweeps a little too close to Lara's décolletage for comfort. At this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Sony took the first steps to making such fever dreams a reality by showing off its new 3D TV tech using PS3.

Last year, Philips demoed a 56" 3D HDTV that, incredibly, doesn't require viewers to wear glasses to experience the effect. However, the experience comes with an equally incredible price tag of around £10,000. By contrast, Sony's system requires a pair of surprisingly non-fugly 3D specs, but the results are in a

different league. Along with bespoke footage of beach football, the PS3 piped incredible, hi-def, 3D demos of Motorstorm: Pacific Rift, Wipeout HD and, the jewel in the multi-dimensional crown, Gran Turismo 5.

**The science bit**

But how does the technology work? Sony's Senior Technology Marketing Manager Tim Page explains: "The 3D TV makes the most of the way a TV displays images. With an interlaced picture the odd lines are drawn first and then the even lines, 50 times a second. So for a 1920x1080 picture, 540 lines are being displayed at any snapshot in time. Your eyes are viewing two slightly different images and that's why we see in 3D. In this demo, the left eye's image is displayed by the odd lines and the right eye's image by the even lines. The TV itself has a special film over the front which

helps separate the images and polariser glasses are used to distinguish the images."

That's all well and good, but how does it affect gamers? Well, according to Page it doesn't... Yet. "At the moment it's just a prototype. We're seeing if we can achieve 3D without glasses and a lot depends upon content – certainly there are plans for 3D Blu-rays. Broadcasters are also interested. The Motorstorm demo looked superb, and that could be an interesting application."

So it might be a little way off but Sky has been showing off similar tech recently, and given that, in theory at least, upgrading the PS3 to create 3D graphics could be a simple matter of a firmware upgrade, the future of gaming could be closer than any of us dare dream.

Which PS3 game do you most want to see in 3D? Answers on an email to [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com)





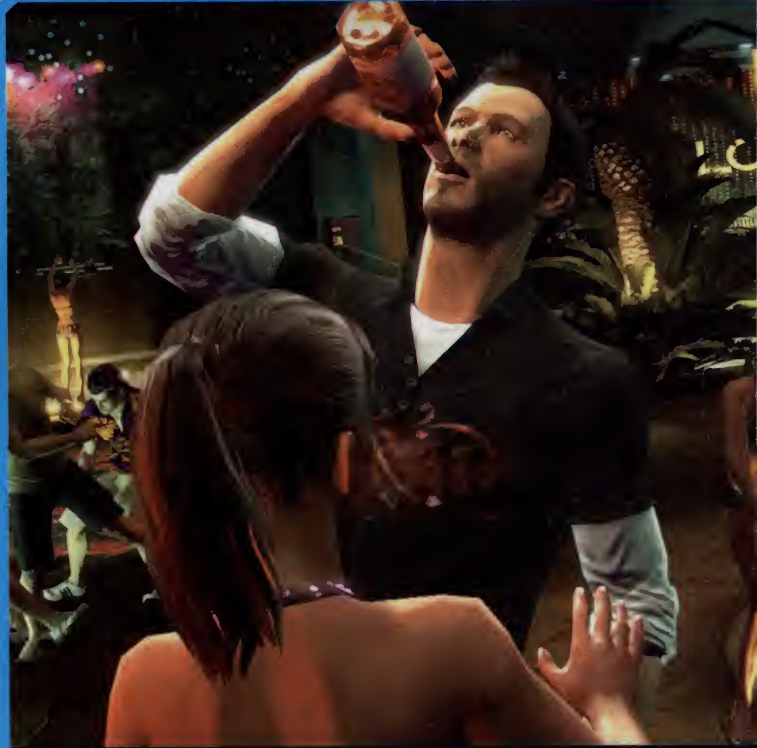
# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



## Timesplitters 4 FRD

Nottingham developer Free Radical Design went into administration in December 2008 seemingly killing any chance of a new 'Splitters. However, the game is known to have been in development and there's apparently been strong interest from potential investors...



## This Is Vegas Midway

At the time of going to press, troubled US publisher Midway was facing bankruptcy with debts of around \$150m. If the veteran company fails, we wouldn't gamble our savings on this flashy GTA-clone seeing the light of day. Wheelman should be safe, though.

# 5

# Games at risk?

## With the economy going to hell, will games get burned?

### Fire sale theory

Games don't necessarily die when a company goes down – the good stuff is often snapped up. "As we've seen with the former Vivendi products, there's still enough positivity around for most people and projects to find new homes," says Phil Elliot of Gamesindustry.biz. "Just look at Ghostbusters..."

In case you haven't heard, there's a right old recession on. Unemployment and bankruptcy are rife and there are no more property programmes on TV. So will the videogame industry come through unscathed? Well, no. But is that necessarily a bad thing?

In some ways things are looking healthy. According to data release by trade body ELPSA, UK consumers spent £4bn on videogame products during 2008, which doesn't exactly scream disaster. Recently however, sales have been dented by the collapse of Zavvi and Woolworths, while general skittishness on the

stock market is playing havoc with even the biggest publishers. As Phil Elliot, editor of industry news site Gamesindustry.biz explains, "On a single day in January, Activision Blizzard's share price fell by around 6.5% for no valid reason, given that Call Of Duty, Guitar Hero and World Of Warcraft were still raking it in. It's the big downside of being listed – your stocks don't exist in isolation and you can be affected by wider issues." In such a volatile climate the standard response is to slash costs – which is why the likes of EA, Eidos and THQ have announced job cuts, and why Midway shut its Austin studio.

So will the recession affect future game development? According to the developers and publishers we've spoken to the answer is a definite yes. "There's no question that publishers are exercising caution," says Eidos product acquisition director, Ian Livingstone. "We're certainly refocusing on our cornerstone franchises. That doesn't mean we won't be thinking creatively about those titles and we'll continue to innovate – we have to. But it does mean we're not going to be as active as we were in funding new titles."

The thing is, caution will creep in along the entire pipeline. Gamers will





## The Dark Knight EA

Rumoured to be in development at EA-owned Pandemic Brisbane, the studio has allegedly just been 'set free' by the suddenly extremely cautious publisher. Will the Batman license be passed on to another team? It's all a little late now, isn't it?

be more conservative about the types of games they buy and, in turn, jumpy retailers will stock up on 'guaranteed' sellers and order fewer original titles. Consequently, we'll witness greater reliance on well-known brands. It's unlikely, for example, that EA's Christmas 2009 line-up will focus on original ideas, à la 2008's emphasis on *Dead Space* and *Mirror's Edge*. Publishers will also be squeezing as much new product as possible out of existing franchises – think Ubisoft's ever-growing Tom Clancy range.

### Lend us a tenner...

Several key industry sources we spoke to also reckon there will be a sharp increase in the number of games getting canned – especially offbeat projects. With marketing, manufacturing and distribution costs running into millions, publishers may just decide to cut their losses and run.

But wait. It's not all bad news. The crunch may actually turn out to be a

good thing for gamers. "Publishers are likely to be more selective," reckons Darren Jobling, director of business development at veteran independent developer Eutechnyx. "There'll be less mediocre products, but the same number of quality releases." Most pundits agree that we'll see drastically fewer 'me too' titles lurking around trying to copy big-hitters like *GTA* and *Burnout*. Meanwhile, originality won't die, it may just migrate onto PSN, where games are cheaper to produce. Atari's Phil Harrison recently revealed that the publisher would be concentrating more on downloadable content. And Capcom is already publishing offbeat stuff like *Flock* via online distribution.

The message is, yes, there will be more sequels, but less tat – and good ideas will always find a way to gamers. This isn't a crisis, it's a wake up call. And maybe it's long overdue.

Could the credit crunch be a good thing for the games industry? Send your thoughts to [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com).

## 6 Get MGS4 on iPhone

Konami delivers killer app



In the unlikely event that anyone ever asks you "is that a snake in your pocket?" you'll now be able to legitimately answer "yes, and it's solid". Because despite Hideo Kojima's insistence that *Metal Gear Solid 4* could only be done on PS3 because it needs the huge capacity offered by Blu-ray, the alchemists at Konami have somehow cooked up a version for iPhone and iPod Touch. It's called *MGS Touch*, it's due out in the spring, and features eight levels with more to be added later.

Disappointingly for excitable owners of other consoles, *MGS Touch* is the new game that was teased on the Kojima Productions website at the end of 2008 – rather than the often-rumoured port of *Guns Of The Patriots*.

### Double tap

Movement and shooting are done by tapping the touchscreen, while making a pinching motion between thumb and finger zooms the game's targeting reticle. Finished levels will earn you bonuses – *MGS*-themed wallpaper is go, but we'd prefer a CODEC-style ringtone.

Konami also plans to bring *Silent Hill* to the iPhone and Touch, with a new game played from the first-person perspective which features all the faceless death nurses you've come to know and possibly feel an awkward attraction to. Completing the Apple love-in is a *Frogger* game, but as we excommunicated him in 2005 after the *Frogger: Helmet Chaos* scandal, this is where our story must end.





7

# Prototype's revival

## Delay pays dividends for shapeshifting sci-fi actioner

### A Radical history

Recently named one of the top employers in British Columbia, Vancouver-based developer Radical Entertainment has been making games since 1991. Its CV was never glittering – unless you consider *The Simpsons Road Rage* and *Crash Tag Team Racing* as PS2 classics – until it released the hugely underrated *Scarface: The World Is Yours* in 2006. If *Prototype* delivers anything like the quality that the company's Pacino spin-off did, it'll be a hit.

Following our first hands-on with *Prototype* last year we cautiously likened it to a cross between *GTA* and *Assassin's Creed*. Despite some rough edges, the free-roaming action game in which the protagonist, Alex Mercer, has developed super powers after contracting a powerful virus, clearly had real potential. We were particularly impressed by Alex's abilities – like shapeshifting and consuming the bodies of enemies, giving him access to their memories. So it was genuinely deflating when the game appeared to get lost in the Activision-Vivendi merger last July.

Happily, it's back, and those rough edges have been buffed to a mirror shine. Originally due out last October,

the delay has enabled developer Radical Entertainment to hone the game's features, and it's now on track for a summer release. "The extra development time has really let us work more attention into the game's fundamentals, such as Alex's shapeshifting powers and parkour movement abilities," explains executive producer Tim Bennis. "Alex can unlock a new gliding power, which allows for some pretty OTT action like continuously attacking and jacking multiple helicopters without ever touching the ground." That's in addition to flicking cars around like peanuts, hopscotching over rooftops and actually assuming the identities of those fallen enemies we mentioned

earlier. Oh, to be Heston Blumenthal, just for a day.

### Not a Rockstar

But can *Prototype* really live up to the *GTA*-does-sci-fi billing? Bennis says yes... and no: "We're both in open-world New York environments so it's inevitable that comparisons will be made. However, we've always been very clear that this is a very different open-world experience to *GTA*'s. If you aren't ripping off an Infected Brawler's jaw whilst ducking gunfire from an attack chopper, you're just not working hard enough." Sounds strong. Bring on the virus.

For more information and the latest *Prototype* trailer, hit [prototypegame.com](http://prototypegame.com).



■ Kill a man, absorb him, then take on his identity. "Hello darling."

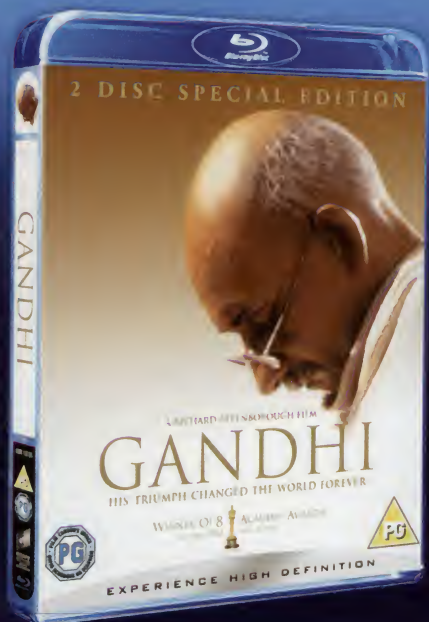


■ Enemy design is a bit 'Francis Bacon paints Iain Dowie'.



■ Gory kills include punching through people. Lovely.

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# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



**Out!**



**Safe!**



**Home run!**

8

## Why *this* is PS3's best sports game

How fan feedback keeps MLB 09: The Show on top

### The small print

Contracts in Major League Baseball are the most complex in any pro sport, and we'd need a large book to fully explain the Rule 5 draft, option years, waivers and arbitration. Handily not only does MLB 09 feature these crucial ingredients of the pro game for the first time, it also includes a detailed handbook within the huge Franchise Mode to help guide you through the treacherous waters that are off-season negotiating. Scared? Don't be. It's worth learning baseball's finer features just to sample The Show.

Watching your favourite sports game make the same mistakes year after year is depressing like waking up and finding a Spurs season ticket by your bedside. But imagine if someone actually listened as you turned the air blue over Pro Evo's crappy throw-ins, or the knackered crossing in FIFA, or, well, everything in NBA Live. It'd be amazing, right? Which is why we're hoping a new initiative undertaken by SCEA San Diego will lead to a revolution across all sports games.

Over the last two years the developer's MLB The Show series has deservedly earned a reputation as the most lifelike sports game around, and much of that has to do with fact the

developer talks directly to users of [operationsports.com](http://operationsports.com), a specialist site for sports fans, in order to find and fix mistakes, and brainstorm new ideas. Now it's welcoming hardcore players onto its team via an official 'community initiative', whereby forum representatives talk to The Show's developers on a regular basis to discuss what elements the people who really matter – the fans – want added or changed.

### The listening game

It's already paying dividends, with the already class-leading gameplay now supplemented by some genius, fan-requested add-ons in MLB 09: The Show. For instance, progressive lighting sees evening games slowly turn from dusk to night as you play, while the 3D crowd (already streets ahead of those in any other sports game) dress according to the weather conditions. And as well as assigning a section of any song on your hard drive

to act as a batter's walk-up music, you can even record lines of encouragement (or, more likely, abuse) to be shouted out as he prepares to swing. Plus numerous tiny stadia corrections have been made based on feedback from season ticket-holding gamers of each MLB team, including working jumbotrons featuring numerous animations for in-match events like strikeouts and home runs – as well as a host of stats.

Without discussing these ideas with dedicated fans these additions, as well as many other gameplay tweaks which add to The Show's already unparalleled realism, might not ever have seen the light of day. It's refreshing to see a developer place so much trust in its core audience – especially as the end result should be MLB 09 retaining its crown as PS3's most authentic sports game. Now, Konami: about the Master League...

MLB 09: The Show is out in the US on 3 March, and we'll be reviewing it in a forthcoming issue.



### Player talk

"I guarantee that all Red Sox fans are going to get a big kick out of recording their own chants as it's a new way to razz [New York] Yankee players."

Dustin Pedroia  
'08 MVP, Boston Red Sox

9

# Taking the HDMI lead challenge

Does an expensive lead *really* mean a better picture?

## What is HDMI?

HDMI stands for High Definition Multimedia Interface, a cable format introduced in 2003 and capable of supporting standard, enhanced and HD signals. HDMI carries red, green and blue visual information independently and synchronises them before display. The HDMI standard has evolved since its original inception: if you're buying a cable to use with your PS3, ensure it's at least HDMI 1.3 compatible.

We've always figured that one HDMI lead is as good as any other. The signal's digital, we reasoned, so it either works or it doesn't. On that basis a cheap supermarket cable does just as good a job of sending images from your PS3 to your HDTV as high-end alternatives that can run into hundreds of pounds. Right?

Not so, according to Digital Performance Level (DPL), an independent industry body that tests HDMI cables. DPL president, Jeffrey Boccaccio, explains that information can be lost in a digital signal just like in an analogue one, and he's packing some science. Yes, the signal is made from binary bits – ones and zeroes – but apparently these can be "smeared and degraded" as the signal passes through the wire.

"It is not measured the same way as in the old days of analogue," Boccaccio continues. "It incorporates a system measurement known as 'bit transition analysis' or 'eye patterns'." This gauges the cleanliness of the signal's data transitions – how quickly

it registers changes from one to zero – and are so called because the waveform result resembles a human eye.

"The [aim] is to produce a robust and symmetric eye around the eye mask [the centre of the eye], keeping any signal data as far away from the eye mask as possible," Boccaccio explains. "Touching the mask, called 'kissing the dirt', is where bit errors can begin to occur and cause the sporadic 'sparkles' on the screen."

## Bad science?

Several elements can cause this kind of data loss – lengthy cables, high temperatures, mismatched lengths in the internal wire pairings, or a bad connection in the 'clock channel', which synchronises HDMI's red, green and blue signals before they're displayed. And with better insulation, materials and connectors – and, of course, a higher production cost – expensive cables do perform better in DPL's tests.

All of which is pretty much beyond debate. But what we wanted to know

was whether the difference was perceptible to actual human eyes or just super expensive testing equipment capable of detecting tiny fluctuations in data integrity. So we performed a blind test among the OPM team using three cables – a £7 special from Homebase, a £20 Sony-branded official PS3 lead, and an Ethereal EXS which retails for just under an eye-watering £110.

The results were unanimous. Although the general opinion was that the differences were negligible, every participant ranked Ethereal as the worst of three. Our test setup was perhaps not lab quality, with some glare from office lighting and no way to test the quality of the television's connections and circuits. But realistically, these are the sorts of environments that most people play games in, and on that basis it's hard to see the value in paying more just to keep your ones and zeroes a little further apart.

To find out more about the DPL testing system go to [dplrating.org](http://dplrating.org).



# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

## 10 Should Hideo direct MGS5?

Our experts argue over regime change



### Yes

Says editor-in-chief (who once sang karaoke with Hideo Kojima), **Tim Clark**

You could make Metal Gear Solid 5 without Hideo Kojima. You could also hire another director to shoot the sequel to The Dark Knight instead of Christopher Nolan. Either way you'd be a unique kind of madman. Because their strength is that they represent their creator's singular vision. Kojima is one of gaming's only auteurs. Each new game is stamped with his crazy/cool signature. And yes, in the case of MGS, that means smoking monkeys and leg-crossing talk about nuclear proliferation. But it also means never releasing anything without genre-defying ambition and vertiginous production values. You don't pick and choose the bits you like, you buy into the whole thing or walk away.

### King of Snake

Ask yourself what an MGS game without Kojima in charge would be like? Given how conservative Japanese sequels are by nature (another trend he bucks) it'd be little more than a pastiche, with similar themes and characters but none of the pizzazz. Isn't that why each new MGS feels like such an event? You want to see what the big man's brain has cooked up, to experience something as sublime as The End boss battle from MGS3, or a gadget as cool as MGS4's Octocamo. I think that people who say they don't want Koj in charge of the next MGS don't really like Metal Gear games at all.

Is MGS without Koj like Snake without a tobacco-addicted primate? Text 'Kojima Yes' to 87474.



### No

Says Snake superfan and amateur psychologist, **Paul Fitzpatrick**

At the risk of chronically exceeding my authority as a Metal Gear Solid fan, I know what's best for the future of the series, and crucial to my plan is not letting Hideo Kojima anywhere near the helm of MGS5. Allow me to explain. It's my firm belief that Kojima is addicted to Metal Gear and the respect and adulation it earns him, and sorely needs an intervention if he and the series are to evolve. Just think about MGS4 for a moment – it's basically an eight-hour cry for help from a genius who can't escape the orbit of his greatest creation. Koj has often stated that MGS's hero, Snake, is a thinly veiled manifestation of his own hopes and fears. At a crucial juncture in MGS4 Snake realises that unless he takes himself out of the equation, the world will never be free to move on. The game drips with closure from every cut-scene.

### Pastures new

To date, Kojima's evaded accusations that he only has one killer series in him, but with MGS4's end credits, the time arrived for him to prove it and apply his brilliantly leftfield approach to something new. So while returning to direct MGS5 would, in the short term, make Konami and Sony's bean counters happy and pacify change-averse fans, it would ultimately stifle Metal Gear's legacy, and that of its creator. If you really want MGS5 to evolve, it's time to set Koj free.

Do you think it's high time for Kojima to move on? Text 'Kojima No' to 87474.



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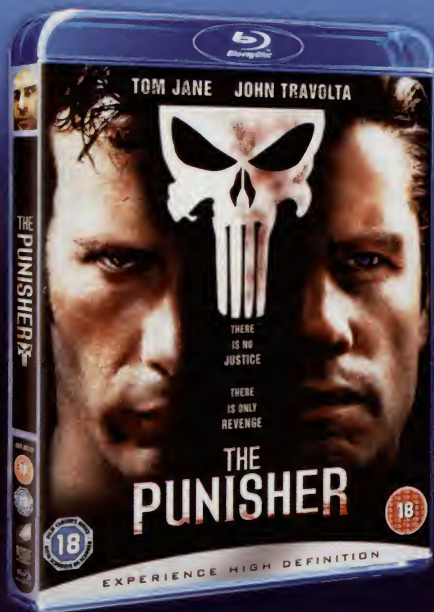
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Your gamer's guide to the month ahead.

We maintain *Mirror's Edge* is a great game, but not necessarily a comfortable one to play. The exhilarating sense of leaping gracefully across an urban abyss as sexy free-runner Faith delivers an actual head rush whenever you look down. Why does controlling Faith feel so much like being her and doing whatever she's doing? The answer is that *Mirror's Edge* tricks your brain into believing that you actually *are* doing the things you see on-screen. In a word of very many syllables, it all comes down to the principle of proprioception. "Proprioception is our sense of where our body is in space", explains Tom Stafford (psychologist and co-author of the *Mind Hacks* book and blog). "It's a sense like vision or hearing. Can you clap your hands together with your eyes closed? That's proprioception."

But your sense of proprioception isn't all that refined. In fact, it's highly vulnerable to exploitation by games developers. It'll give you a dose of vertigo. "When you're in a game, proprioception isn't taking in visual

information to update and clarify where our limbs are," Stafford continues. "What is crucial is the timing of actions and responses. Our brains work like big coincidence detectors and use improbable coincidences to make decisions about what is real. So if every time you press a button your avatar on the screen responds immediately, then your brain will decide that the avatar is part of you."

### I am not a camera

Tom Farrer from DICE, the developer behind *Mirror's Edge*, confirms that proprioception was part of the plan when they were making the game – even if they weren't speaking the language of neuroscience at the time. "We were into the theory but not the actual science of proprioception. Everything was very much focused on really making the game feel like they had a physical presence in the world – that they had a body, a form, a presence. It was all about escaping the feeling of being a camera with a gun that you can't see. So the dev team came up with a

## Brain ache

Some games that mess with the player's senses



### ScrewHome

This puzzle exploits the optical illusion that makes you see three dimensions on a flat TV screen. The physics of the game are determined by the way you view it. Move the camera angle to obscure an obstacle, for instance, and as far as the game is concerned, it ceases to exist.



### Portal

Screw with your spatial-temporal reasoning by shooting holes in the fabric of space. Look on as your character jumps through the portal and flies out disconcertingly from the opposite corner of the screen. Sounds easy? Just try telling left from right in mirrored double reverse-vision.



### Siren: Blood Curse

The sightjacking trick which lets you see your character through the eyes of the attacking Shibito forces you to see the area from two different positions at once. Tricky, and quite upsetting when you're watching your own entrails flying about through the eyes of a ravenous Japanese zombie.



▲ It's entirely possible to feel like you have the body of a woman without wearing your mum's clothes.

ing of Faith's body in a game which was to show her on-screen as the player would see her.

...what did DICE build Faith so as to be a woman, a confidence detector? "Lots of tinkering, tweaking. Endless tweaking! We couldn't just think in terms of 'how do we make this feel responsive?', we had to think about how we would make it feel natural as well," says Farrer. "Getting the movements to feel right, weight transferring to the right parts of the body; syncing the camera, sound and body movement's natural curve of acceleration; comfortable feeling of inertia... the list goes on and on."

### New bodies

Faith's body is exceptionally agile but she still follows the standard template of four limbs and one head. With developers getting more adept at hacking

proprioception, could they go even further from our own body? What's the likelihood of a game that can make you feel like an amputee when you come off the worse for wear after a grenade attack – or, more ambitiously, put you in the body of a many-tentacled alien?

Quite high actually, reckons Stafford: "Coming to feel that you have a totally different body is entirely possible with the right interactions. Our brain is designed to mould itself to whatever it finds in the world." And, happily, things needn't look realistic to put the proprioception hack into effect – the only requirement is that they respond convincingly to your commands. DICE is looking into taking things to the next level. Farrer says: "We're very interested in developing the first-person experience. I think we've only just scratched the surface of what is possible."

# RUMOUR MACHINE

## Insider whispers

The next instalment in the Ratchet & Clank series is about to be unveiled by Insomniac Games.



Burnout developer Criterion Games is working on a Black sequel, tentatively called Black: Second Mission.



The next Need For Speed will be created by a new dev team within EA, and be a significant change of direction.

The sequel to Army Of Two (...Of Three?) will be shown off soon.

Deus Ex designer Warren Spector is creating a steampunk game featuring Mickey Mouse.



Reboots of Ghost Recon and Rainbow Six will both hit shelves before 2009 is out.

As well as making Modern Warfare 2, Infinity Ward is also working on a secret game involving assassination.



# The new sing star

Okami reviewed via the medium of song



028

Here on the good ship OPM, we like to think we bring you entertaining and original reviews, but we draw the line at singing the verdict as a close harmony. Rebecca Mayes on the other hand is making a name for herself on the net with her tuneful game reviews. Our favourite is her take on Capcom's acclaimed adventure Okami, which you can find at [snipurl.com/acm9j](http://snipurl.com/acm9j). Best lyric: "I'm a wolf and my best friend's a little bug who frankly rubs me up the wrong way."

Mayes was asked to do the review by [gamepeople.co.uk](http://gamepeople.co.uk). "As a songwriter I love being challenged so I was up for it straight away," she told us, pointing out that the hardest part was, "making it both a good song and a good, honest review." She's not a big gamer, but thinks her new perspective helps her review games in a fresh way. Mayes now hopes to tackle Uncharted 2: Among Thieves as soon as it's out. Meanwhile, if she'll take requests we'd like a mournful ballad about the original Resident Evil. "Zombie, why are you sad? Please don't kill me, it'll make me mad..."

▲ Follow Rebecca's critical singing career at [twitter.com/audiogamer](https://twitter.com/audiogamer).

# Games hit the Tweet spot

Discover the place developers go to gossip...

## ncroal

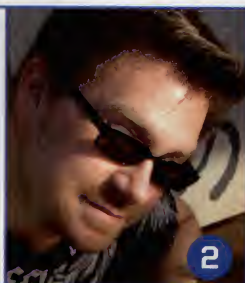
"Flower is everything that Mirror's Edge should have been."



1

## DylanJobe

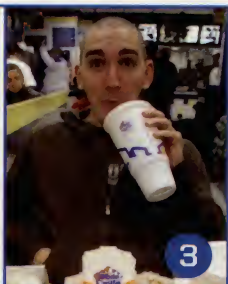
"Just finished some prep work for what will hopefully be a very productive year of studio work."



2

## fourtwozero

"Just got an idea for a cool way to solicit some suggestions for our next game via twitter. Reaching out to twitter-savvy devs, stay tuned."



3

## Veronica

"Doing social experiments in PS Home with some of the @P\_TOM staff. Hijinks, I tell you!"



4

Want to join a club where developers, journalists and fans talk games, swap news and spill secrets? It's free, it's updated hundreds of times a day and it's just a click away. Welcome to Twitter, the embarrassingly-named new social networking phenomenon.

You might not think you need another social site in your life, but hear us out. Twitter is like Facebook's update feed but without the pictures of the people you haven't seen in five years, or blogging without the waffle. Each Twitter update is only 140 characters long, just enough to pass on important news, a good joke or a link to some new screenshots, and the games world is all over it.

When games journalist N'Gai Croal got a first look at Heavy Rain, he tweeted about it seconds later. Rob

1 N'Gai Croal is a big-name games columnist for Newsweek and Edge 2 Dylan Jobe is the man behind Sony's Warhawk 3 Rob Bowling is community manager for Infinity Ward 4 Veronica Belmont is the face of Sony's Qore in the US.

Follow team OPM on Twitter! OPM\_UK

Bowling, community manager at Infinity Ward used Twitter to announce the Call Of Duty 6 beta invites being emailed around the web were fake. You can even catch up on what films David Jaffe is watching, or what Warhawk's main man Dylan Jobe had for tea; and they're just a handful of the studios, developers and designers who Tweet everyday. It's the quickest way to find out the latest news, and it's straight from the developers themselves. Forget Facebook, for gamers, 2009 is officially the year of the Twits.

## WHO SAID THAT?

VIP quotes

### David Jaffe on the

new God Of War III trailer: "The footage aired on Spike looked meh."



"If anybody wants to bet some money online, we could play right now." 50 Cent wants your blood on the sand.



### Metallica's Lars

Ulrich tells his kids, "maybe you think dad is a complete dork, but he's got his own videogame."



Nirvana bassist, Krist Novoselic can't play In Bloom on Rock Band 2. "I couldn't quite master this new, different way of playing it."

## OPM HOT TOPIC

Which PlayStation game has the best ending?



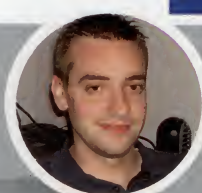
**Ken Turner**  
Project director, Creative Assembly

"The original Metal Gear Solid. The story just culminated in such a spectacular theatrical climax. It was an amazing way to cap of the gameplay experience."



**Ben Mattes**  
Producer, Ubisoft Montreal

"I love endings that make you go back and think about the experience you just lived, to see if anything you took for granted is now painted in a different light. Like Shadow Of The Colossus."



**Gavin Carter**  
Lead producer, Bethesda

"Final Fantasy XII. It's a game I poured dozens of hours into. I really enjoyed the characters and the setup of the world, so it was a great payoff to see how things finally ended up!"



**Craig Sullivan**  
Creative director, Criterion Games

"Metal Gear Solid 4 sewed up every loose end and answered every question I had. It made me feel like my epic ten-year journey was finally complete."



## Song bird

How Rachel Penny turned a SingStar party into a therapeutic breakthrough

A few months ago I would rather have eaten cat food than played a game of SingStar. Some people are scared of spiders, or heights, or going below the 10% free space mark on the Sky+ box. (Not on my watch!) But I couldn't even *think* about performing live without getting a case of the vapours. At least at a pub karaoke session no one can hear you over all the talk about Stevie G and Wazza. Play SingStar, though, and people actually get to see exactly which notes you're missing, as if hearing you mangle the chorus to Mr Brightside somehow wasn't clear enough.

### Stage fright

Now, I'd be the first to admit that I'm not a singer – back in my school days I was refused a place in the choir. (Even the kid who ate the PVA glue got a place in the choir!) Naturally I threw a massive tantrum and they eventually let me in, but on the understanding that I wouldn't actually sing anything out loud. And so I became the Milli Vanilli of year

fear I managed it – purely because he threatened to fire me if I didn't.

So I wasn't exactly looking forward to the SingStar party I attended recently. All the usual symptoms were there – unladylike glow, feeling a bit wobbly – so I was busy looking around for the Financial Times when the birthday girl handed me the mic and demanded I sing with her. There was no way out without looking like an Elton John-style prima donna ("I won't sing



Stronger than yesterday – Rachel is now Queen of the mic.

“I'd sneak into work and lock myself in the festering pit that is our demo room.”

five. I don't have a therapist, but the one I just made up in my head entirely blames this trauma for my crippling shyness when it comes to PlayStation pop.

The measures I would take to avoid holding one of those USB mics were considerable. If I was reviewing a SingStar game I'd sneak into work early, lock myself in the festering pit that is our demo room, a full floor beneath the OPM office, and pray the cleaners weren't wandering down the corridors. At parties I'd busy myself with anything – pouring drinks, finding snacks, reading the business section of the paper with a furrowed brow – just to avoid being hauled up. I was once forced to stutter out a few lyrics of Morrissey with OPM's ed-in-chief Tim. Rigid with

without my orchids!") so I started singing. And it actually felt pretty good. It *didn't* matter that I couldn't sing. No one was pointing, or laughing, or clutching at their heads as their ears bubbled with blood. It was amazing! In that moment I was Beyonce, I was Whitney, I was sort of Rick Astley! After which point you couldn't drag me away. I'd sing anything – songs I didn't know, songs other people had claimed, even songs by Meatloaf.

So I want to give a shout out to all those people who feel the need to feign a stroke every time someone pulls out the SingStar mics. Man up, grab that microphone with both hands and let rip at the top of your voice, because you never know, it could be a life-changing experience. One word of warning, though. Don't rap. Never, ever rap.

## MY GUILTY PLEASURE



Ben Wilson can't tear himself away from **Gottlieb Pinball Classics**

Like Tuesdays, homeopathy, and Ewan McGregor, the game of pinball is essentially pointless. Press some flippers to make a ball bounce around and trigger bright lights and ker-razy noises – I assume most people grow out of it at the age of around, ooh, three. (Hours.) And yet I can't stop playing bloody Gottlieb, with its tackily themed tables and twitchy-but-oh-so-addictive flicking of L and R and its arcade-on-the-pier sounds and its pretty pretty bright lights and its collecting of credits to unlock more tables to earn more credits for more tables and MY GOD I HAVE TO HAVE ALL THE CREDITS I HAVE TO I HAVE TO HAVE TO. Pinball, then: crap. Pinball + OCD: forbidden love.





**Vuzix iWear AV920**

She might look like a blind lady from the year 2032, but these specs pack in 920,000 pixels – we assume the effect is like pressing your face against a 62” plasma. “Kiss me, Katy Perry!”

**£180**  
play.com

**Flow Speakers**

Blow your redundancy money on PVC speakers that are less quirky, bolder, or pad, and more Mirror's Edge meety. Ridiculous, an installation.

**£1,700**  
audioblastart.com



**Tritton AXPRO Headset**

Support for 5.1 surround sound means you'll be able to pick out the laughter over the gunfire as you limp in last again at Call Of Duty: World At War.

**£150**  
cooleststuff.co.uk



**Want that**

Lust-have kit for PlayStation people

**Glow Graffiti**

Nothing says classy like scrawling 'I'm leaving you' in enormous letters on the bedroom wall using a can of UV light 'powered' spray paint. C'mon, stop crying now.

**£35**  
suck.uk.com



**Mech RC**

As well as doing all the usual robot stuff (singing, dancing, uprising) you can programme your metal minion with your own bespoke commands. "Towel me off first, then the club sandwich Jeevesbot."

**£399**  
iwantoneofthose.com

**Philips Essence**

The new light weight champion in the world of HDTVs, this super slim LCD weighs the size zero (a 5kg. Go on love, at least have an apple.

**£2,000**  
expansys.com



Prices and availability of products are all correct at time of going to press

Agenda

Sony



PS  
032



## The facts

- Ten-metre range
- Water resistant
- Vibrating alert
- 80 x 60 pixel OLED display



# Sony Ericsson MBW Bluetooth Watch



It's not just a matter of time...

**?** **£200**  
amazon.co.uk

## Face value

The mineral crystal face will fend off scratches and glare, while the watch is also water resistant up to 30 metres and has quartz movement for absolute precision – should you, for instance, be planning a really elaborate bank heist.

## In a nutshell

Picture the scene: your phone goes off in the office, blaring out its custom ringtone (Usher's 'Love In This Club') as you rummage through your bag only to discover it's the man from Kwik Fit car insurance. Again. With the MBW range of Bluetooth watches, that shame/fury can be avoided. These timepieces will vibrate to let you know when you've got a call, and you can see who it is with a glance at your wrist. You can even hang up without touching the phone.

## What's so special?

Forget dull old watches that merely tell the time or let you go 500m underwater. (Who has a bath that deep?) In addition to providing caller ID, the watch will also show the track name of whatever song you're listening to on your phone. Simply tapping a button enables you to reject a call or skip a song. The Bluetooth capability operates within a ten-metre range, and the watch will vibrate if you wander out of that zone, so you'll never accidentally abandon your phone on the bus again. There's no complicated setup either, thanks to the auto-pairing technology that instantly connects the two devices.

## Tell me more...

Gadgets are pointless unless they look great, so the MBW comes in a range of styles, designed in conjunction with watchmakers Fossil. The MBW-150 comes in three styles, the Music Edition (pictured left), the Executive Edition and the Classic Edition. And ladies, you can work the MBW-200 range, which has all the same features as the MBW-150 but comes in three more feminine designs, like the bling-studded Sparkling Allure (top).

## Screen time

The discreet display is only on show when the partnered phone's Bluetooth connection is in use. It uses OLED (organic light-emitting diode) technology for a crisp and clear image.

## PLAYSTATION TOP 10 CHARTS

This month's heroes and zeroes

▲ Up ▼ Down ● Non mover + New entry

## PS3

- 1 ● Call Of Duty World At War
- 2 ▲ LittleBigPlanet
- 3 + Skate 2
- 4 ● FIFA 09
- 5 ▼ The Lord Of The Rings Conquest
- 6 ● Resistance 2
- 7 ▼ Fallout 3
- 8 ▼ Need For Speed Undercover
- 9 ▼ Grand Theft Auto IV
- 10 ▲ Guitar Hero World Tour

Source [chart-track.co.uk](http://chart-track.co.uk)

## PS2

- 1 + Tomb Raider Underworld
- 2 ▼ Call Of Duty World At War
- 3 ▼ FIFA 09
- 4 ● PES 2009
- 5 ▼ Need For Speed Undercover
- 6 ▼ Lego Batman
- 7 ▼ WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009
- 8 ▼ Guitar Hero World Tour
- 9 ● Star Wars TFU
- 10 ▲ Mercenaries 2 WIF

Source [chart-track.co.uk](http://chart-track.co.uk)

## PSP

- 1 ● FIFA 09
- 2 ● Need For Speed Undercover
- 3 ▲ Football Manager 2009
- 4 ▼ PES 2009
- 5 ● Lego Batman
- 6 ▲ Lego Indiana Jones
- 7 ▼ WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009
- 8 ▼ Star Wars TFU
- 9 ▲ Crisis Core FFVII
- 10 ▲ Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09

Source [chart-track.co.uk](http://chart-track.co.uk)

# The PlayStation entertainment plan

Fill up your life with our monthly guide

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
 <p><b>23</b></p> <p><b>Issue 29 on sale</b> And you made the right call in the newsgent. Please send feedback, candid pics and leaked government data to <a href="mailto:opm@futurenet.com">opm@futurenet.com</a></p>	<p><b>FEB 17</b></p>  <p><b>20</b></p> <p><b>Sonic boom boy</b> Start practicing your Spinning Piledriver and excuse about the broken controller in preparation for the release of Street Fighter IV on PS3. <a href="http://streetfighter.com">streetfighter.com</a></p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p><b>Blood bath</b> Find out why we're so obsessed with sloped hats and milkshakes, by watching <i>There Will Be Blood</i> on Sky Movies. Drama HD. <a href="http://sky.com">sky.com</a></p> 	<p><b>23</b></p> <p><b>In the Blu-ray bin</b> Kill Switch, a thriller written by Steven Seagal, hits Blu-ray. As far as we can tell it's no relation to the old PS2 game. <a href="http://insightfilm.com/killswitch.html">insightfilm.com/killswitch.html</a></p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p><b>Flipping food</b> Prepare to be mugged in the supermarket aisles for the last bag of flour – it's Pancake day. <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrove_Tuesday">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrove_Tuesday</a></p> 	<p><b>27</b></p> <p><b>Space invaders</b> Killzone 2's gritty brilliance will make you weep 720p tears. It's only on PS3 and it's out today. <a href="http://killzone2.com">killzone2.com</a></p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p><b>Sticky toffees</b> David Moyes' Everton 'entertain' West Brom at Goodison at 12.45. It's live on Sky Sports 1 and HD1. <a href="http://premierleague.com">premierleague.com</a></p> 
<p><b>MAR 02</b></p> <p><b>Jilted generation</b> Prepare your fires for starting and your bitch for smacking. The Prodigy release their new album <i>Invaders Must Die</i> today. <a href="http://theprodigy.com">theprodigy.com</a></p> 	<p><b>05</b></p> <p><b>Excess baggage</b> Catch those precious remaining moments before the X Factor contestants fade back to obscurity as the live tour hits the O2 Arena. <a href="http://xfactor.com/xfglb">xfactor.com/xfglb</a></p>	<p><b>06</b></p> <p><b>Who watches?</b> Giant squid ending or not, <i>Watchmen</i> is still the cinema release of the year. Pull a sickie and catch it today. <a href="http://watchmenmovie.warnerbros.com">watchmenmovie.warnerbros.com</a></p> 	<p><b>08</b></p> <p><b>Top dog</b> The BBC might have dropped its coverage, but poodle fanciers can still catch the last day of Crufts at The Birmingham NEC. <a href="http://crufts.org.uk">crufts.org.uk</a></p> 	<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>LBP FTW!</b> The BAFTA Games Awards (partly judged by OPM) sorts the prestigious from the unplayable. Sit down, Sonic. <a href="http://bafta.org/awards/video-games">bafta.org/awards/video-games</a></p> 	<p><b>11</b></p> <p><b>Mercurial music</b> Last year's Mercury Prize-winner's Elbow bring their poetically anthemic brand of indie rock to the Plymouth Pavilions. <a href="http://elbow.co.uk">elbow.co.uk</a></p> 	<p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>BLOC rockin'</b> Agnex Twin, Lee Scratch Perry, DJ Godfather... yours may not thank you for taking them to the BLOC Weekend dance festival today. <a href="http://blocweekend.com">blocweekend.com</a></p> 
<p><b>16</b></p> <p><b>Eyes have it</b> If you can't get enough of Shia LaBeouf's boyish charms you're in luck – thriller <i>Eagle Eye</i> is out on Blu-ray today. <a href="http://eagleeyemovie.com">eagleeyemovie.com</a></p>	<p><b>17 Mar</b> Issue 30 on sale. Subscribe now on page 24</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p><b>Happy hour</b> Pint for the fella, sexist stereotype for the lady. Al Murray serves up his pub landlord schtick at Hull City Hall. <a href="http://thepublandlord.com">thepublandlord.com</a></p>				



▲ You too could be as happy as the extras from Skins.

## Supersize your hi-def ...with an Optoma GT-7000 HD projector

Killzone 2 looks glorious, so just imagine how much more glorious a whole 300 inches of it would look. We're giving you the chance to nab a copy of the game and an awesome Optoma GT-7000, a hi-def projector designed especially for gamers that beams out an image big enough for the neighbours to enjoy/endure. Plus, another four runners-up will also get a copy of the game. To be in with a chance of winning answer the following question correctly:

What is the name of the Helghast emperor in Killzone 2?

**A VISARI** **B SHEVCHENKO** **C GARZA**

Text using the word 'Killzone' followed by a space, then your answer A, B or C followed by a space, then your name or address to 87474. Or enter at [futurecomps.co.uk/opm29](http://futurecomps.co.uk/opm29). Winners will be picked at random from all correct entries. Closing date: 17 March 2009.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS** By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers and promotions from Future Publishing Ltd and related third parties. If you do not want to receive this info please text the word 'STOP' at the end of your message. Texts will be charged at £1.00 plus your standard network rate. By taking part in a competition, you agree to be bound by the Competition Rules which are summarised below but can be viewed in full at [www.futurecs.com](http://www.futurecs.com). The winner will be drawn at random from all correct entries after the start date 10/02/2009. Prize draws will take place on 18/03/2009. The winner will be notified within 28 days of the draw. Only UK residents aged 18 and over may enter. No employees of Future Publishing Ltd or any company associated with this competition, or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise, are available. Future Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury caused by any prizes won. Publicity may be given to any winners and/or entrants and their names and/or photographs printed. Late or incomplete entries will be disqualified. Proof of posting shall not be deemed proof of delivery. Entries must be submitted by an individual (not via any agency or similar) and are limited to one per household. The Company reserves the right in its sole discretion to substitute any prize with cash or a prize of comparable value. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Where prizes are offered on behalf of an associated company these prizes are provided in their entirety by these associated companies. Future Publishing Ltd cannot be held responsible for any failure to provide prizes as specified and all enquiries relating to such prizes will be referred to the associated companies. You may have to provide additional information. Receipt by you of any prize is conditional upon you complying with (amongst other things) the Competition Rules. No purchase necessary. Winner lists are available by written request within three months of the closing date from Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.



## FIVE YEARS AGO IN OPM

This month we visit  
**OPS2 #44**

The cartwheeling wreckage of polished chrome and sparks on the cover of issue #44 heralded our exclusive hands-on feature with what would become the definitive PS2 racer, **Burnout 3**. We were excited about the global selection of tracks, the gorgeous garage of new cars and, most of all, about breaking stuff. 'Sparks fly, glass shatters and chassis twist like never before,' we eulogised. 'Bonnetts now flap and crumple, doors swing open and everything just gets that little bit more hurt.' Lovely.

News kicked off with a reveal of Capcom's sword and sandal slasher **Shadow Of Rome**, which we hoped would capture the public stonings, orgies, incest, flagrant homosexuality and roasted zoo animals' of the Roman Empire. Not so much. We also had first word on **Silent Hill 4: The Room**, new details about the momentum-gathering **Call Of Duty: Finest Hour**, and tested various rumours surrounding what would later be confirmed as **GTA: San Andreas** (Shaun Ryder's to appear in the game? Probably true, we decided, because 'why would a man addled by years of substance abuse come up with such a specific lie?').

Previews had barely started before it impaled itself on a clumsy spear of hyperbole by describing **Driv3r** as a 'surefire smash sequel,' but then recovered ground with **Rainbow Six 3**, **Fight Night**, **Hitman: Contracts** and soon to be classic **SingStar**.

The brutality of Japanese horror **Forbidden Siren** was the highlight of a low-key reviews section. It scored 9/10, two more than Jet Li's **Rise To Honour**, R-Type Final and Mafia, and eight more than 'total toss' BBC tie-in **Fightbox**.

## FIVE MINUTE SKIVE

Games to play  
when the boss  
isn't looking



### Minotaur China Shop

It's not easy running a porcelain business as a giant mythical bull. Sell your fragile wares and earn a profit, or smash everything up and cash in on the insurance.

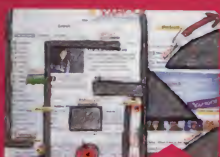
[snipurl.com/9hmxh](http://snipurl.com/9hmxh)



### Charger Escape

There's a mystery afoot in the stables, and it's got nothing to do with the sinister blacksmith. Use your wits and hooves to find a way out of this straw-scattered hellhole in this curious adventure.

[snipurl.com/9hmw6](http://snipurl.com/9hmw6)



### I Made This. You Play This. We Are Enemies

It might look like a page from a stained notebook found in a serial killer's basement but it's actually a smart little platformer. Mental, but smart.

[snipurl.com/9hmww](http://snipurl.com/9hmww)



**This is not a game.**

Make believe is for kids. The RAF do it for real. Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs) and Fighter Controllers are the eyes and ears of the RAF's defence capability. ATCs are responsible for the movement and deployment of all military and civilian aircraft around airbases and for the necessary ground organisation to allow aircrew to carry out missions. Fighter Controllers use the latest high-tech equipment to place combat aircraft in the right part of the sky at exactly the right time. Both jobs require you to make important split-second decisions that will affect the lives of your pilots, your fellow crew, your enemy and the public. Now there are no high scores. Only high stakes. Start here.

Text **BATTLE** followed by your email address to 88RAF (88723)  
[rafcareers.com](http://rafcareers.com)

 **ROYAL  
AIR FORCE**

The Royal Air Force values every individual's unique contribution, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or social background. Usual network charges apply.



Preview

48

### WWE LEGENDS OF WRESTLEMANIA

Pros: Just about every wrestling great ever appears on the roster.  
Cons: baby-simple control scheme.

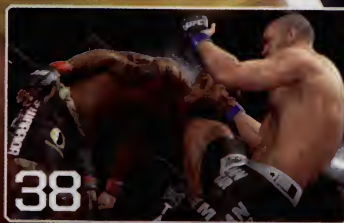
# PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK Previews

## Latest info on Planet PlayStation's hottest games

**H**ow many times have you dismissed a game just on the strength of the screenshots? Take UFC over the page. If you're not into 'wrestling' games (it isn't one) you may already have written it off. Which would be a mistake. The UFC's savage brand of mixed martial arts is one of the fastest growing sports. Here Brazilian Jiu Jitsu experts take on Muay Thai kick-boxing masters, with realistic physics used to calculate punches and a combat system that's more Fight Night than Smackdown. It's basically the Gran Turismo of getting your face kicked in.

Then there's The Godfather II. Despite our initial "why God, why?" feelings towards it, there's some interesting stuff going on here, mixing open-world mayhem with tactics as you manage and run your criminal empire. A surprise.

Not everything's bucking the trend, though. Wolverine is looking every bit the templated movie tie-in. "What's that generic soldier? You want me to pummel you with a three-stage combo?" If I must.



38

### UFC 2009 UNDISPUTED

It's the Hokey Cokey for real men: you put your right leg in. And in. And in. And in until they stop fighting back. There isn't really much of a chorus.



46

### THE GODFATHER II

Okay, the original sucked but the sequel's blazing street shoot-outs and strategy makeover mean this actually looks good in a Mercenaries meets Risk kind of way.



51

### X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE

He has knives for knuckles, superhuman healing powers, and monster enemies. So how can this fail? Look, we need to talk...



Preview

Hot Developer **Format** PS3 ETA June Pub THQ Dev Yuke's

# UFC 2009 Undisputed

△ Cuts ○ Fractures ⊗ Bruises □ Concussions



038



## Quick pitch

### Knockouts

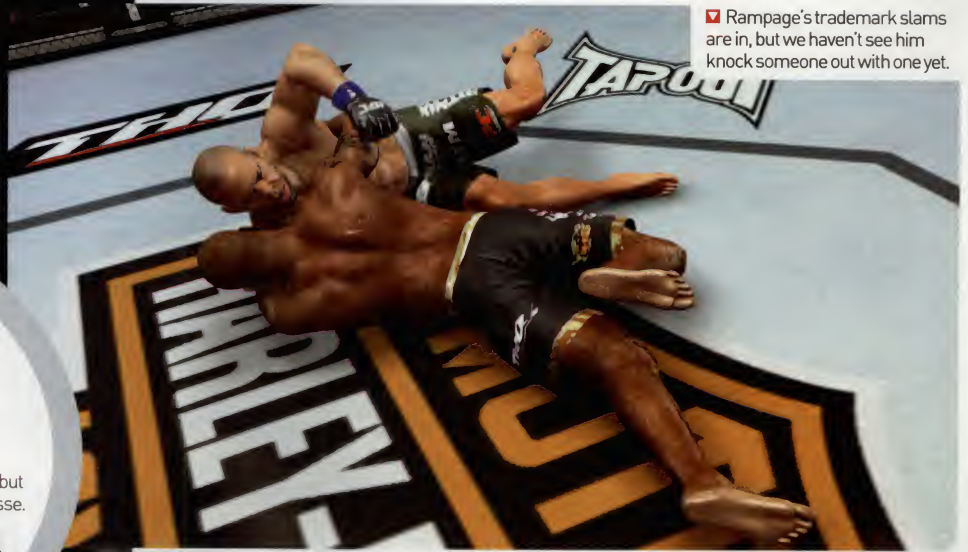
Punches are affected by momentum. So, if you run into a fist, it hurts more.

### Tapouts

You waggle the stick to crank on an armbar, but getting an opponent in position requires finesse.

### Ground and pound

Get into a grapple and throwing haymakers from the top can finish a fight quickly.



▣ Rampage's trademark slams are in, but we haven't see him knock someone out with one yet.



**T**here's a thing in mixed martial arts called a 'puncher's chance'. It basically means that if you're a boxer who isn't particularly good at the grappling side of things – that's submission wrestling and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu – you can always go in swinging and hope to score a knockout. Trouble is, it's a risky option. Especially against a fast opponent well trained in the other disciplines. If they get you on the floor and in a lock you'll be as helpless as a fish on a rug. If you want to be a legitimate contender, you have to learn the other stuff.

### Sucker punch

In UFC 2009, everybody starts with a puncher's chance. The basics are easy. Throwing out blows works a lot like Tekken, with each limb mapped to a different button so you can deliver any combination of punch and kick, left or right. **△** blocks high, **□** low and **○**

throws harder; 'signature' versions of a character's basic moves – like Dan 'Hendo' Henderson's overhand right or Rashad Evans' spinning backfist. Get the hang of this and you can play the game like a kickboxing version of Fight Night. You just won't do very well.

See, the beauty of the UFC is that you can do pretty much anything. Okay, so eye-gouging, fish-hooking, hair-pulling and punching your opponent's John Browns are banned. But tackling a man to the ground and elbowing his face into paste is fine. And this is where the tactical elements come in. Nudge forward on the right stick and you'll initiate a clinch or a rugby-style tackle. If you can get your man down from there, it goes into the ground fighting. There are subtleties to achieving this – regarding where your opponent is and what they're doing when you go for the move – but get them down and things get serious. ▶



# Preview



✔ Likenesses are uncanny. They've nailed Penn's receding hairline and wonky ears, and Nogueira's got a massive scar where he was run over by a truck as a nipper.



✔ Fighters' gumshields can be bashed out by serious punches.



“There’s plenty of detail – the ring girls are beautiful, if a bit toothy.”

If you land in ‘guard’ for instance – where the other guy has his legs wrapped around you – you can throw punches or elbows, blindly trying to stop the fight with a lucky KO. Or, depending on what your fighter specialises in, you can twirl the stick a quarter circle to pass into ‘side mount’ – a better position to attack from. Your opponent, however, can respond to whatever you do. He can slap on an armlock with a tap of the stick, say. Or,

if you try to change position, he can take advantage of your shifting weight to land you on your back. It depends on your position in a grapple. Whoever’s on top has to keep the other man guessing while the fighter underneath needs to look for openings.

### The damage done

Although the action’s fast-paced, different moves have the same relative chances of working as they do in the

▲ The effectiveness of a ‘shot’ is based on your opponent’s position – if they’ve just thrown a kick you’ll nail them.

real thing and offer the same rewards. So easier moves might be easier to pull off but deal less damage. There’s also the clash of styles to consider, and the fact that certain fighters have their own areas of expertise. Anderson ‘The Spider’ Silva, for instance, is deadly in a

## 5 big questions The need-to-know on UFC

**1 Who’s in it?**  
A total of 80 fighters, spread across five weight divisions. Only a dozen are confirmed for the game, but all the champs are in.

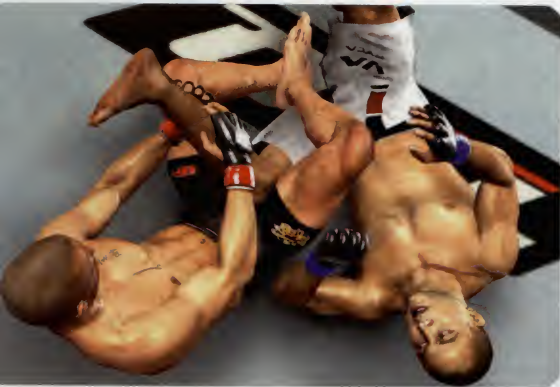
**2 What about the moves?**  
Fighters have two ‘styles’ – such as Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, boxing or wrestling. Each fighter has his own signature move.

**3 Is there an energy bar?**  
There’s a stamina bar that shows you how close you are to KO – it can plummet after a hard punch but regenerates quickly.

**4 Any hidden fighters?**  
Former boxer and UFC president Dana White refuses to confirm whether he’ll appear, but we wouldn’t be surprised.

**5 How quick are the knockouts?**  
The fastest knockout in UFC history took seven seconds. You can match that, but it’ll be no easy job.





▲ One thing that could be tweaked is the selection of submissions. We've never seen Georges St-Pierre [otherwise known as GSP] go for a kneebar, ever.



# Who the hell is Wanderlei Silva

A man. Who scares us quite a lot

## Character history

Affectionately known as "The Axe Murderer" for the way he hacked through early opponents, Silva's best known for his never-back-down style – he always comes forward swinging wild hooks, but he's got a Brazilian Jiu Jitsu black belt to fall back on if the fight hits the He's known to worn a snorkel while training to increase his ability to breath under stress.

## Toughest fights

### Sakuraba

Silva fought Japanese hero Kazushi Sakuraba three times – twice knocking him out cold, once planting him headfirst into the mat and also dislocating his shoulder with a slam.

### Rampage

Silva was knocked out in his last fight with Quinton Jackson, but before that he kned him into oblivion twice – once leaving him dangling through the ropes.

### Liddell

When both men were at the peaks of their careers, there was huge speculation on who'd win – Chuck "The Iceman" Liddell or The Axe Murderer. The fight didn't happen until years later, but Chuck only just edged it in a vicious three-round brawl.

### Jardine

Wanderlei hit his stride in the UFC with a 50-second demolition of 'Dean Of Mean' Keith Jardine, holding him by the throat and punching him into unconsciousness.

### Henderson

Silva has fought Hendo twice – the first time he foot-stomped him into the floor under Pride rules, which allowed stamping on a downed opponent. Under the more sporting American rules, he found himself on the wrong end of a spinning backfist that sparked him clean out.



clinch. Let him grab you around the back of the head and he'll knee your face off. Rampage Jackson, meanwhile, might not be able to pull that off but he does have a brutal line in ground-n-pound where, unlike other fighters, he can stand up inside your guard and throw vicious punches.

You never know exactly what's going to stop a fight. Walk into a big left hook and you could get knocked out in seconds. Or, alternatively, you might be stunned and drop to the floor as a grey-tone screen tells you that you've got a few seconds of desperate defence between you and an early stoppage. In some fights, the ref will

stop the punishment simply because you aren't fighting back. It's unpredictable but then that only adds to the realism – and excitement.

There's also plenty of incidental detail that adds to the feel of a proper fight. The refs, for instance, respond to whatever you're doing just like they would in a real fight. The cameramen also follow you with precision and the ring girls are beautiful, if a bit toothy. And in a touch that's sure to be a relief to anyone who's ever played a Smackdown game, the commentary's excellent – Joe Rogan calls the fight perfectly, peppering his play-by-play account with anecdotes about the

fighters, and Mike Goldberg actually makes more sense here than he does during the live broadcasts. Listening to Rogan and watching the moves is a good way of learning about the sport, and anyone who's watched the event a few times should take to the action quickly. Career modes, create-a-fighter options and online capabilities have yet to be confirmed, but the game's already looking mighty impressive. It's tricky enough to master that it'll put casual button-mashers off, but put a bit of time in and the moves feel incredibly intuitive. And you've always got a puncher's chance – just not a very good one.

## Dev talk



"A lot of our team have been taking mixed martial arts – Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, wrestling, Muay Thai. It helps with the game." Neven Dravinski Project manager, UFC 2009 Undisputed



Preview



### Quick pitch

#### Leap through time

It's a shooter in which you move back and forth between 1950 and 2010 thanks to a curious substance called Element 99.

#### Waving goodbye

Trigger old Soviet machinery to create time waves and drag Nate between eras.

#### Enemy territory

Battle everything from giant mutant bugs to the Soviet forces of the 1950s.

Can't wait? Play these



#### Bioshock

(PS3, Take Two)  
The underwater world of Rapture, with its faded architectural glory and scattered audio recordings, is a master class in evocative FPS design.



#### Timeshift

(PS3, Sierra)  
Desperate for a bit of time travel and don't mind a wonky plot? Timeshift, by Russian studio Saber Interactive, has time grenades, slow motion and a solid multiplayer mode.

Dark Horse **Format** PS3 **ETA** Summer **Pub** Activision **Dev** Raven

# Singularity

△ Time ○ Travel ⊗ 1950 ◻ 2010

**P**eople just never learn when it comes to fooling around with cold fusion. One minute they're tinkering in the lab with a mysterious substance known only as Element 99, the next they've caused a rift in the space/time continuum. Maybe we should ask the makers of sci-fi shooter Singularity to explain the plot of Lost...

The hero in the middle of all this is Nate (after Drake and Hale, do we really need another one?), a US Air Force pilot who crashes his plane while investigating some strange readings on an island just off the coast of Russia. Before you know it, he's skipping back and forth between 1950 and 2010, and finding out just what the Soviets were up to with Element 99. Along the way he faces time storms,

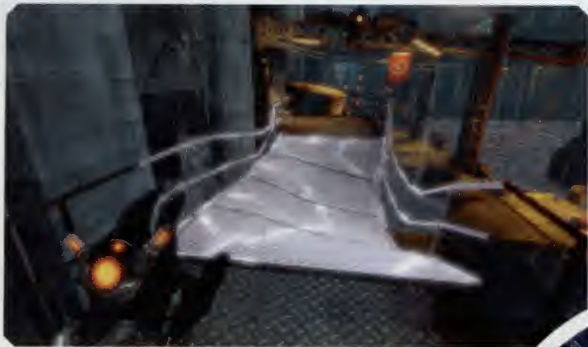
exploding bugs and – yes! – men with guns. Yet at no point does he get it on with the Eastern Bloc's answer to Billie. Or even Catherine Tate.

### Taking your time

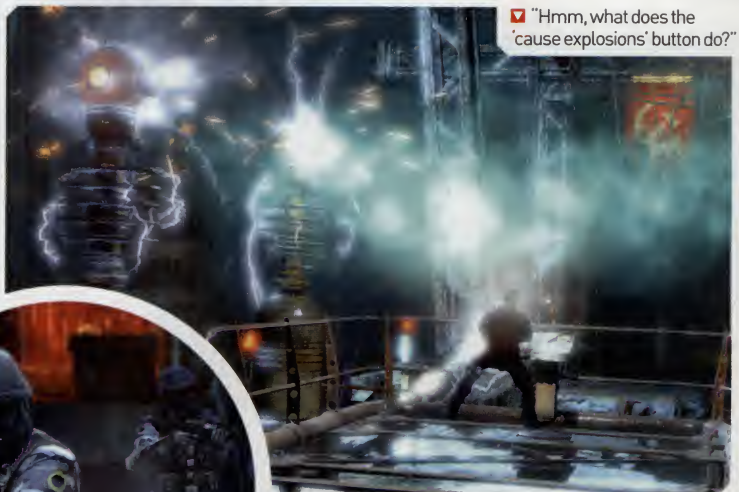
Nate's ability to affect items with time is all thanks to his useful TMD, or Time Manipulation Device. It's essentially a glove that lets you speed up or reverse the passage of time on everything from battleships to enemy soldiers. Mastering it is essential to solving puzzles, and getting the upper hand in battle. Why waste a bullet when you can age a bridge under your enemy's feet so it rusts away and they plummet to the ground? There are subtler uses, like ageing or reversing a blackboard so you can see the notes that have

been written on it, and there are the not so clever touches, like the fact that every door handle you come across is rusted, and needs serious anti-ageing treatment. If you get a bit baffled about what you can use your new powers on you can just whip out your chronolight, a torch that illuminates things that are susceptible to the TMD.

Using your powers on people is the best bit of the whole deal. We watched a soldier age until he looked like the crypt keeper, before disintegrating. Alternatively, you can reverse time on your victims. It doesn't turn them into whimpering babies; instead they devolve into squirming fleshy sacks. It's not clear yet why you'd choose one option over the other, but it's still the best part of owning a TMD.



▲ You can fast-forward time to destroy walkways. Whatever happened to just planting some C4 and legging it?



▼ "Hmm, what does the 'cause explosions' button do?"



▲ A waft of your magic glove and he's literally history.



The level we saw had Nate running around a Soviet battleship, searching for a vital, unexplained artefact. He'd had to drag the vessel up from the sea by reversing time, and as he explored, it started to revert back to its actual state. The metal screeched and warped around him, the corridors rusting in front of your eyes. On the deck we found a trail of bodies, while the bowels of the ship were populated by robotic bugs that burst out of egg sacs. The entire vessel is obviously

being menaced by a giant beast who'll be revealed later in the storyline.

There's a real sense that Raven is aiming for Bioshock levels of atmosphere, with audio recordings, notes and ghostly figures from the past constantly repeating their actions. Apparently these people are stuck in 'timegatory'. (See what they've done there?) Nate then has to create a portal and jump between 1950 and 2010 over and over again, fixing electrical panels and aging doors, then resurrecting old

"Raven is aiming for Bioshock levels of atmosphere."

Soviet machinery to escape as the ship finally begins to sink. This particular element showcased an innovative, intelligent approach to first-person puzzling – made all the more exciting by the fact that, at any moment, the effects of Element 99 could suck Nate back into the other time zone and straight into a gun battle.

The downside is that the combat itself looks so generic. Just when your attention has been grasped by a tricky puzzle, up pops the kind of half-hearted shootout that's all too familiar from the likes of Timeshift and Turok. We're also concerned about getting lost in the time mechanic – there were occasions when its complexity had us asking each other what the hell was going on. Singularity is clearly a unique twist on shooter conventions – but that could easily end up becoming more of a curse than a blessing.

## Also by Raven, Singularity's developer



### Black Crypt

[Amiga, 1992]  
Raven's first title started life as a Dungeons & Dragons-style tabletop game before becoming a successful RPG on the Amiga home computer.



### Soldier Of Fortune

[PS2, 2000]  
A once notorious first-person shooter famed for its gory dismemberment system, which let you shoot enemies to pieces.



### Marvel Ultimate Alliance

[PS3, 2006]  
This action RPG was a dream come true for obsessive comic book fans, featuring some of Marvel's obscurest characters. Super-Skrull anyone?



Preview

Dev talk



"There are face-offs where villains test their mettle mano-a-mano with the Dark Knight, then there are other bosses who are much more crafty than that!"

Sefton Hill  
Game director,  
Rocksteady Studios

044

Hype Magnet **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2009 **Pub** Eidos **Dev** Rocksteady Studios

# Batman Arkham Asylum

⊕ Caped ⊙ Crusader ⊗ Clown ⊖ Carnage

**A**rkham Asylum's director Sefton Hill is very clear on what he doesn't want his game to be. "We don't want a superficial Batman experience that's just called Batman because the lead character is in a cowl." Which, given the usual superhero dross – light *and* heavy attacks, stop it, you're spoiling us – is at least a worthy ambition. "The island itself is a key character in the game," says Hill, speaking about Batman Arkham Asylum's sizeable free-roaming environment, which encompasses both the Bat Cave and the titular madhouse. "Every texture, object, character and line of dialogue is true to the Batman universe," adds Sefton.

The most important item in Batman's utility belt is the Batclaw – an attachment for his grapple gun. Hill explains, "It has a combat use, allowing Batman to pull thugs in then deliver a knock-out punch, while for exploration it allows him to rip off grate covers and navigate new areas." In practice it sees Batman swinging between the rafters, dropping down to take out a bad guy before zipping back up to the shadows.

### Reel 'em in

The combat is built around such stealthy muggings. From the Gothic heights of the asylum, Batman can scope out Joker's goons – who've literally helped him take

over the asylum. The Bat Visor enables him to see who's packing heat so you can target the biggest threats first. There are a variety of moves, the pick of which is a gliding kick delivered after Bats swoops, cape outstretched. You can also hang upside down, grab a thug and leave him dangling from the roof. Or you can just dive in and smash everyone up. Plan it well, and you can take a room full of enemies apart one by one.

However, the concern hovering over the game like a big Bat signal is whether players will just find the most efficient move and use it constantly. Hopefully the gentle detective work and some impressive bosses will spice the mix up.





**Quick pitch**  
**Holy Harley Quinn**  
 Take on a host of Batman's foes, including The Riddler, Joker, Bane and Harley Quinn.

**Unleash the beast**  
 Detective work is vital as Batman uses scanners and Bat-gadgets to dig out clues.

**Button bashing**  
 Combat uses three buttons – attack, stun and throw – with abilities upgraded as you gain experience.

▲ The Joker's rigged some of his cronies with collars that trigger alarms when they're knocked unconscious.

# Could Be A Contender

## Merchant Of Brooklyn



This one sounds like it's going to be a winner

### The premise

It's the year 3100 AD and cloned Neanderthals are being used as slave labour and combatants in underground pit fights.

### The reality

A gory first-person brawler in which you play as a prehistoric man with a bionic arm, crushing skulls and blasting enemies.

### The hook

The finishing moves are super-messy, and we like the bright, cel-shaded art design.

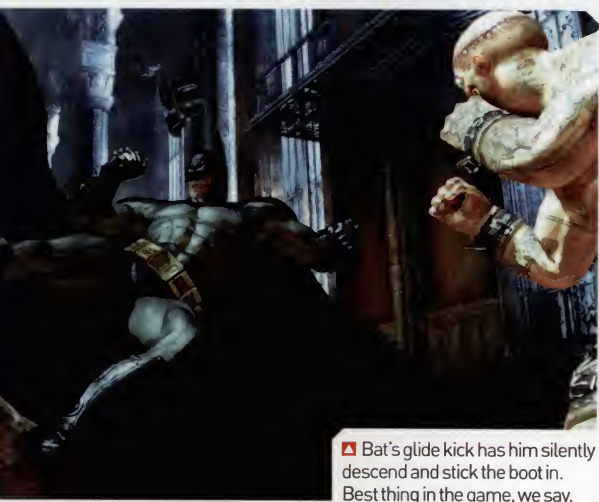
### The inspiration

Part Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, part Jean-Claude Van Damme's Kickboxer.

### The chances

The visual style is intriguing and the chance to play as a skull-popping caveman is never to be sniffed at.

Format PS3 ETA TBC Pub TBC Dev Paleo Entertainment



▲ Bat's glide kick has him silently descend and stick the boot in. Best thing in the game, we say.

Source Amazon.co.uk

## Pre-Orders The punters' top three



**1 Killzone 2**  
 Every fleck of concrete and wisp of smoke looks perfect, but this sci-fi shooter is way more than just a pretty face. Prepare for a hostile welcome to planet Helghan as you fight the space fascists on their own turf.  
 Format PS3 ETA 27 Feb Pub Sony



**2 Resident Evil 5**  
 Discover the origins of the zombie virus in the horror series' PS3 debut, set in the blistering heat of Africa. Chris Redfield's got a new partner, too, adding co-op to the shufflers 'n' shotguns formula.  
 Format PS3 ETA 13 Mar Pub Capcom



**3 Street Fighter IV**  
 It's back, it's beautiful, and it's getting scores like a Chinese gymnast. Old favourites like Ryu and Chun Li return alongside new challengers like Abel and the morbidly obese, never-picked, Rufus.  
 Format PS3 ETA 20 Feb Pub Capcom



The Next... **Starface** **Format** PS3 **ETA** 27 February **Pub** EA **Dev** EA Redwood Shores

Cast list



**The boss**

**Michael Corleone**  
Crime family boss, and your in-game employer. Note lack of actual Pacino fizog.



**The fixer**

**Hyman Roth**  
Childhood friend of Don Vito who now runs the Jewish mob. Tricky.



**The brother**

**Fredo Corleone**  
The weakling child of the Corleone clan passed over in favour of Michael.

# The Godfather II

△ New ○ York ⊗ Miami ◻ Havana

**F**rancis Ford Coppola was vocal and furious about the original game, calling it "a misuse of the film", and it's unlikely he's going to be any more chipper about this sequel. I actually felt queasy during the hands-on session. Not because of the violence – although there's plenty, ranging from headbutts administered using the right stick to the splattercore shotgun-in-mouth executions – but because there's such a jarring disconnect between the elements that are relatively faithful to the film, and those that feel like they've been beamed in from another game entirely. Specifically, from *Scarface: The World Is Yours*. So on the one hand you've got the evocative art design, which captures the '60s setting of the film, and cut-scenes that (barring Pacino) use the likenesses and voices of the screen actors. But then – look! – who's that no-mark hanging out with Hyman

Roth and Michael Corleone? Oh, it's me. And I'm saying key lines from the movie. Of course I am.

## Mob handed

It's when you get into the gameplay, that any notion of verisimilitude is dumped like a body in the reeds. One section I saw had dozens of button men in bulletproof vests engaged in a rooftop shoot-out that was so fierce it could have been set in Helmand Province. Which isn't to say it's not fun to play. What you've got here is a solid open-world crime game built on surprisingly deep strategy foundations. The plot of the film provides a backdrop for your racketeering, with key events playing out as you wrestle control of NYC, Miami and Cuba from the rival Five Families. Note that the game also jettisons the 'early Vito' arc of the movie, presumably because establishing a dodgy olive oil-

importing firm in the '20s isn't as much fun as firebombing bakeries.

Taking over an enemy-owned business involves rocking up with your goons and then intimidating/punching its owner into submission. Gain control of all the locations in a particular racket and you unlock a perk. For instance, once you own all the brothels in the vice racket you'll be given a set of knuckle dusters that enable you to do +50% damage. Cash earned can be spent on upgrading your men's skills, and you'll likely form a powerful bond with the most efficient of them. Or at least you will until you find a more skilled gun for hire but don't have a free slot on your family tree. The answer is to select the runt of your criminal litter and mark him for death. He'll then be vulnerable to friendly fire and you'll soon have an opening. Say what you like about the Mafia, when they say 'you're fired' they mean it.

# Can't Wait To Play...



Industry insiders reveal their PS3 faves

Vispi Bhopti  
The Creative Assembly Australia

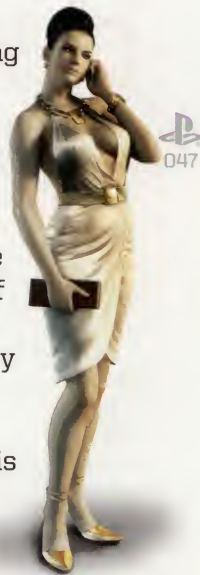
## Street Fighter IV



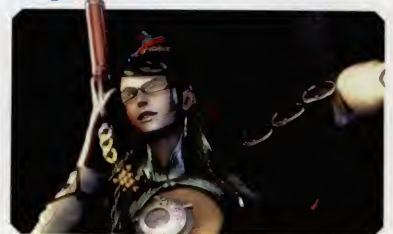
"While all my mates saved their money for their first car, I bought an original Street Fighter II Championship Edition arcade cabinet. Hadouken! Hadouken!"

## Resident Evil 5

"There is something unnervingly exciting about having zombies running towards you and knowing that you don't have an infinite cache of ammunition to be wildly trigger happy with. It's the only game where conserving ammo is nearly as exciting as expending it."



## Bayonetta



"Stunning. Absolutely beautiful. I had the pleasure of seeing this title in action at both E3 and Leipzig last year, and I just can't contain my admiration. I have incredible respect for Platinum Games."



▲ The run 'n' gun side of the gameplay is solid enough. Think Mercenaries in sharp suits.



✔ The 'Don's Eye View' lets you plan your next move.



✔ You'll also be able to take your hired guns online in the multiplayer mode to further boost their reputation.





Preview

WRESTLEMANIA



Dark Horse **Format** PS3 **ETA** 20 March **Pub** THQ **Dev** Yuke's

# WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania

⬆ Ravishing ⬇ Hitman ✕ Ultimate ◻ Hulk

**O**dd one, this. The 35-strong roster of old faves featured in Legends (Ravishing Rick Rude! Bret Hart! *Ultimate Warrior!*) means every wrestling die-hard will want to buy it on release day. The problem: the control system isn't going to appeal to those dedicated fans *at all*.

In Legends, the shoulder buttons and sticks are redundant. Instead the entire control system is mapped to the D-pad and the four face buttons, in an

attempt to appeal to a wider audience than those who play Smackdown vs Raw. It's a big risk and, frankly, we're not sure it's going to work.

## Suffocating holds

The entire game feels like virtual rock-paper-scissors. Blocks beat strikes but strikes beat grapples but grabs beat blocks... and so on. Nail one move and you can chain in more by following an on-screen button

prompt, and doing so builds a meter which, when full, enables you to hit your finisher. That's pretty much all there is too it – and right now, it feels distinctly underwhelming.

Granted, we've only had access to four grapplers so far – Hulk Hogan, Andre The Giant, Stone Cold Steve Austin and The Rock. But the fact it's already grown stale on us playing as those huge names doesn't bode well for the game's March release.

PS4  
048

The Next... Double Dragon **Format** PS3 **ETA** March **Pub** Warner Bros **Dev** Deadline Games

# Watchmen The End Is Nigh

⬆ Evil ⬇ Must ✕ Be ◻ Punished



**W**e're going out on a limb here and saying that turning Watchmen into a button-mashing brawler isn't the best approach to such complex material. The End Is Nigh doesn't even follow the events of the book or the movie, choosing instead a made up prequel plot. It has got two of the best characters, though: Nite Owl, a Batman-like moralist, and Rorschach, a trench coat-wearing sadistic vigilante.

These differing crime-fighting styles are reflected in-game. Nite Owl uses

gadgets like Screech Bombs to stun opponents or electrified armour to zap them, while Rorschach fights dirty, going for low blows, using improvised weapons and charging up a Rage meter for extra damage. So far the action involves clearing streets of thugs, although we're promised puzzles that require each heroes' skills to solve. It's an episodic PSN release and this is only the first chapter, so later instalments *could* be more adventurous. And breathe out.





## Quick pitch

### WWE made easy

It's an official WWE game with a more arcade feel than THQ's Smackdown series.

### Rewrite history

Replay the greatest matches from past manias, like Shawn Michaels vs Bret Hart from XII.

### No Macho

Every big name from the '90s is in... other than Macho Man Randy Savage. Noooooooooo!



There must be a way to translate the nuanced tragedy of Rorschach's character into a kick-punch-kick combo. Right?

The action is blood free, except when you tear up this butcher shop.



Dark Horse **Format** PS3 **ETA** Spring **Pub** D3 **Publisher** Dev Vicious Cycle

# Eat Lead The Return Of Matt Hazard

⊕ Comedy ⊙ Caper ⊗ Copycat ⊖ Carnage

There's a reason Chris Rock doesn't riff on the nuances of Japanese RPGs in his routine, but *Eat Lead* is out to prove that games *can* be funny. It's the first comedy shooter on PS3 (unless you count *Turning Point*) and at least the setup sounds funny. Hero Matt Hazard has been the star of videogames since the 8-bit days, but now someone is trying to kill him by hacking into his latest game and filling it with enemies. Cue the reappearance of his old foes, from cowboys to 2D German soldiers called the Waffërthinn. Old allies show up too, like the 'hilarious' Captain Carpenter, a Mario knock-off with a Russian accent.

Gags aside, this is a basic shooter with added wisecracks. Hazard has sniper rifles and sub machine guns to play with, and you'll also find the occasional 'special' weapon that inflicts extra damage on certain enemies. We saw a super-soaker style water pistol that was bafflingly useful when we were up against some SOCOM-style commandos and a pulse rifle for taking down space marines.

Shooters aren't usually where you go for laughs, and even with the voice talent of *Arrested Development*'s brilliant Will Arnett, it seems unlikely *Eat Lead* can turn elevator loading sequences into comedy gold.

049

## Timeline Matt Hazard's fake rise and fall

INSPIRED

**Adventures Of Matt In Hazard Land** (1983)  
An 8-bit side scroller that quickly became an arcade classic.



**Matt Hazard 3D** (1992)  
Hazard blasted his way through the German Waffërthinn in his first FPS.



**You Only Live 1317 Times** (1995)  
Sequel to *Thunder Eye*, and a 3D first for Hazard.



**Haz-Matt Carts** (2000)  
Cult racing game that introduced Captain Carpenter and Sonny Tang.

**Choking Hazard: Candy Gramm** (2002)  
Hazard versus hoards of piñata. Family friendly, sugary sweet and a huge failure.



1983

TIMELINE

2002



# Preview



Lightning is called 'the enemy of mankind.'



Snow Villiers is very handy with his fists.



New face Sazh is a bit of a cry-baby.



Lightning used to be in Cocoon's army.



Cocoon's machines protect its citizens.



Vanille wields a vicious looking bow.



Cocoon's army commands huge craft.



Enemies are decidedly darker than before.



Finger switches control gravity powers.



This ship delivers a mysterious dignitary.



Lightning is the first lead heroine in FF.



Snow is the leader of a resistance group.



Monsters are a mix of tech and beast.



Why is Vanille crucial to Lightning's quest?



Siren is a Summon from FFVIII.



PS3  
050

## Cast list



**The soldier**  
Lightning  
Amnesiac hero who's charged with destroying the city of Cocoon.



**The brute**  
Snow Villiers  
Leader of a resistance movement against Cocoon's government.



**The kid**  
Oerba Dia Vanille  
Red-haired cutie who's been exiled to Pulse for reasons unknown.

Classic Series **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2010 **Pub** Square Enix **Dev** Square Enix

# Final Fantasy XIII

⬆ Lightning Ⓞ Snow ✕ Vanille □ Sazh

**L**atest word on the UK release date? April, 2010. A date so far in the future we're not really sure it exists. At least we know a little more about the story now. Set in the feral world of Pulse, the action focuses on an artificially created city, Cocoon, which has been constructed *in the sky* by a race called the fal'Cie.

## Crystal dynamics

The citizens of this floating haven live a sheltered but controlled life. The heroine, Lightning, a former soldier, has been chosen by the fal'Cie for a strange mission: destroy Cocoon. Why is unclear, but she kicks off by attacking a prisoner train and rescuing Vanille (formerly known as Pigtailed Girl) with help from

blonde resistance leader, Snow. Joining this trio is Sazh Katzroy – an ex-military man who carries a baby Chocobo (FF's perennial bird/steed) in his afro. His 'caring personality' means he's often moved to tears; a contrast to Lightning's icy disposition. A recent trailer suggests she hasn't got much time for cry babies and slaps him to stop an outburst. Nonetheless, his dual-wielded pistols will be a valuable addition to the party, as they should complement Lightning's close range swordplay. So that's a traitorous, genocidal ex-soldier, a rebel, some borderline jailbait and a cry baby with a bird in his hair – it's got to be the weirdest Final Fantasy cast yet. But 2010? Now we're welling up...





▲ Gory finishers might make for flashy combat, but think of the cost in white Gap T-shirts.

The Next... Spider-Man 3 Format PS3 ETA May Pub Activision Dev Raven

# X-Men Origins Wolverine

⊕ Heavy ⊙ Attack ⊗ Light ⊖ Attack

**O**f all the superheroes in the superheroverse, Wolverine should be the easiest to fettle a game around. With his adamantium bones, retractable claws and healing power, he's all-action, all the GD time.

We first see the walking knife drawer in a lush jungle after a chopper crash. It looks promising, mainly because it's so relentlessly stabby. The finishing moves slow the action down to show the havoc metal talons can wreak on an enemy's throat, chest or guts. There are also environmental finishers which make use of handy spikes, say, for a quick impaling. And to be honest, it's refreshing to see a superhero game that isn't scared of splashing around the cranberry juice.

Then the developer explains the combat system – one button for light

attacks and another for heavy. It's the usual combo chaining; stringing together the same basic light, heavy, hack, slash sequence until forever.

## Nail care for dummies

There are other powers too, like a lunge (ie really big jump) and feral sense which Wolverine can use to help pick out weak points on enemies, like fuel pipes on a giant robot. In the level we saw it was also used to highlight a rocky ledge which could be climbed. And which, it has to be said, was pretty obvious in the first place.

It might be early days, but a few buckets of blood can't hide the fact that this looks like a relatively run of the mill movie tie-in – a mindless slashfest full of anonymous enemies. Frankly, our favourite mutant deserves better.

## Did you know?

Star of the Wolverine movie, Hugh Jackman, and his co-star Liev Schreiber (Cotton Weary from Scream) both lend their vocal cords to the game. Wolverine's signature claws are made from adamantium and are fused with his bones. They can slice through any substance (except for more adamantium, obviously) and Captain America's shield. The wolverine is a member of the weasel family, and has been known to kill animals as large as a moose. Wolverine speaks at least eight languages, including Japanese and Spanish.



▲ Fancy military equipment is no match for a man in a mood with adamantium claws.

# Gut Reaction

What's strong and what's wrong

## ▲ Offline 2-vs-2 Pro Evo

Now that our multimedia team is 'fully operational', lunch has become the battleground for print vs digital derbies. Print: losing.

## ▲ No place like Home

Hanging out in Home for a day provides a curious insight into the mind of PlayStation Man. "Dance for me."

## ▲ Co-op carnage

Playing Resi 5 swiftly descends into bitter argument as OPM's diehard survival horror fans flat refuse to share ammo.

## ▼ Lara crash lands

With disappointing sales of the latest Tomb Raider and Eidos for sale, is it all over for La Croft?

## ▼ A singular idea

"Imagine time is like a girl on a swing..." And the award for most confusing premise of 2009 goes to Singularity.

## ▼ I Am Alive

So far, all anyone's seen of Ubisoft's earthquake aftermath game is a CG trailer. Let's hope it isn't taking the 'disaster game' tag too literally.



# The Latest On...

New shots, new games, new info



## Dead Rising 2

Format PS3 ETA TBC Pub Capcom

Capcom overlord Keiji Inafune recently told Japan's Famitsu magazine that the follow-up to the ace 360-only zombiefest will be multiformat. The company's PR flak was quick to cry mistranslation. Whatever, guy. We say: it's happening.



## Cellfactor: Psychokinetic Wars

Format PSN download ETA March Pub Ubisoft

Looks greyer than a grey afternoon in Grays, has an atrocious name... yet could be a cult hit, given that you can fly, teleport, and kill with either gunfire or superpowers. (Hey, we said 'could be'.)



## Dark Void

Format PS3 ETA May Pub Capcom

You're a cargo pilot who's just crashed in the Bermuda Triangle and popped into another dimension where you must take on an alien race. Your mission: Survive. This also features flying. Did we miss a meeting?



## Ryu Ga Gotoku 3

Format PS3 ETA Japan import Pub Sega

Still no UK release date yet for what will become Yakuza 3, but it's looking lush. As well as elbowing Japanese criminals in the face you'll get to play golf and try the karaoke mini-games. Yeah!



## Burnout Paradise

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub EA

The new patch means you can restart events instantly after you fail (or quit) and overhauls the vehicle dynamics – so early cars are slower and harder to write off. A typically brilliant update.



## Dissidia: Final Fantasy

Format PSP ETA July Pub Square Enix

Not a conventional role-player, but a beat-'em-up/RPG hybrid starring characters from Final Fantasies I through XII. An intelligent fighting system makes it one to sort of watch.

## There's more...

Don't listen to any of those rumours about **GTA V** or **GTA Tokyo** coming out this year – Rockstar says there's no chance of another **GTA** in 2009. And there'll be no **Rock Band 3** this year, either. "We've actually made a choice to break out of the annual release cycle for **Rock Band** this year," says Harmonix CEO Alex Rigopoulos, "partly because the annual cycle places limits on the choices you can make as a developer. We're trying to take a long-term view." However, the company's previously announced **Beetles** game will arrive later in 2009. Expect to see **Mafia II** around then too – it's on track for a release in the second half of the year. Following on from the news that 30 people have been let go from Crystal Dynamics, Eidos CFO Robert Brent has admitted a **Lara Croft** makeover may take place in time for the next **Tomb Raider**. "We need to look at everything as we develop the next game," he says. "Look at how **Batman** changed successfully, from the rather sad character of the Michael Keaton era to the noir style of **The Dark Knight**." Wait, goth **Lara**? We're listening...

## Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood

Format PS3 ETA October Pub Ubisoft

Tip your hat to this spaghetti-flavoured western shooter – it's the prequel to PC/360 game **Call Of Juarez**, which managed to capture some of the spirit of Leone's **Dollars** trilogy. This time the setting is Aztec ruins in Mexico, and Polish developer Techland promises 'greed, lust, and lawlessness'. You had us at greed, Techland.



▲ "Closer... closer..." Only at point-blank range can a bullet penetrate a full beard.

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18

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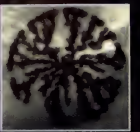
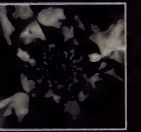

# Turbo boost your Trophy collection




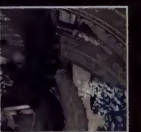

50 Trophies, ten games, two hours, no sweat

**T**hey say cheaters never prosper. But then they also say that stripes are slimming, but the cruel laughter of those girls suggested otherwise. So ignore what *they* say. Use our Trophy cheat sheet, and you'll never again suffer the embarrassment of a Newcastle-style empty cabinet because we've cherry-picked the easiest and quickest Trophies to earn. Many of them are from games you'll already own, others are cheap PSN downloads (Linger In Shadows is particularly slutty when it comes to flashing its silverware), while the remainder can be rented, rinsed for Trophies, and then discarded. What are you waiting for? Go get.

<p><b>LittleBigPlanet</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Artist</b></p>  <p>Place a sticker. Stephen Fry instructs you to do this in the very first Garden level after the credits, so you can't miss it.</p>	<p><b>LittleBigPlanet</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Homemaker</b></p>  <p>Place a sticker or a decoration object ten times in your pod. (That's the room your sackboy is in when you start the game.)</p>
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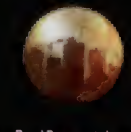
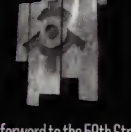




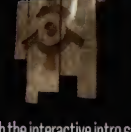




<p><b>LittleBigPlanet</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Fashion Sense</b></p>  <p>Dress up your sackboy with a combination of items from the following categories: head, body and base material.</p>	<p><b>LittleBigPlanet</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - 2X Multiplier!</b></p>  <p>Collect enough point bubbles in a row until you get a 2X score multiplier. You only need to pick up five or so to get the Trophy.</p>	<p><b>LittleBigPlanet</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Traveller</b></p>  <p>Find any community level - it doesn't matter which - and finish it (ie reach the final checkpoint) to get this easy Trophy.</p>	<p><b>LittleBigPlanet</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Neighbourhood Watch</b></p>  <p>Find five random community levels and heart them. You don't have to play them, just flick to the second page of the info box.</p>	<p><b>LittleBigPlanet</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Opinionated</b></p>  <p>Finish a community level then, when it's over, give it a star rating and select a tag. Do this and you'll get the Trophy.</p>
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<p><b>Linger In Shadows*</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Sigil Of Time</b></p>  <p>Start Linger mode and press <b>X</b> twice when the game pauses. Then shake the controller when the icon appears.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Silver - Sigil Of Motion</b></p>  <p>When a scene stops and rewinds, press the <b>LB</b> and <b>RB</b> buttons to cycle backwards and forwards.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Silver - Sigil Of Chaos</b></p>  <p>At 3:06, pause the scene and an icon will appear. Rotate your controller to get the Trophy.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Silver - Sigil Of Nature</b></p>  <p>When the timer reaches 4:48 you'll see a cat. Press <b>Circle</b> when prompted to receive the Trophy.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Silver - Sigil Of Light</b></p>  <p>Finish the final scene. You will now unlock this and the previous Trophies, providing you've performed the correct actions.</p>
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<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Greetings To Fairlight</b></p>  <p>The following Trophies are earned in Watch mode. For this, pause at 2:17 and move the camera to the lower left of the screen.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Greetings To Sunflower</b></p>  <p>To win Greetings To Sunflower, pause at 3:10 and move the camera to the right side of the screen.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Greetings To Still</b></p>  <p>At 3:13, wait for the white icon to appear and then rotate the controller to spin a column around and reveal the Still logo.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Greetings To Farbrausch</b></p>  <p>Pause at 3:31 and move the camera to the lower right of the screen to snag yourself Greetings To Farbrausch.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Greetings To The Black Lotus</b></p>  <p>Pause at 3:56 and move the camera to the lower left corner of the screen. Now that wasn't too taxing was it?</p>
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<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Greetings To Conspiracy</b></p>  <p>Pause the proceedings at 4:20, move the camera to the left and look behind the dog that's lying down.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Greetings To RGB</b></p>  <p>Pause at 4:37 and look to the bottom right-hand side of the screen to find the hidden logo.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Greetings To MFX</b></p>  <p>Pause the action at 5:04 and then look to the left-hand side, by the cat. Score yourself another easy Trophy.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Greetings To Andromeda</b></p>  <p>Pause at 5:43. Now take a good look at the upper right-hand side of the screen to win another piece of virtual silverware.</p>	<p><b>Linger In Shadows</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Greetings To Madwizards</b></p>  <p>Last one. At 5:54, pause and look at the lower right-hand side - this time under the cat.</p>
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\*Trophies in Linger In Shadows are awarded at the end of the game, not as you perform the required actions.

<p><b>Prince Of Persia</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Into The Storm... (Secret)</b></p>  <p>Probably the easiest Trophy you can win - all you have to do to 'earn' Into The Storm is start a new game.</p>	<p><b>Prince Of Persia</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Compass (Secret)</b></p>  <p>Another easy one. Just use the compass and set a waypoint when instructed, then press <b>A</b> to ask Elika where to go next.</p>	<p><b>Prince Of Persia</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Getting To Know You</b></p>  <p>Keep talking to Elika to receive this Trophy. There'll be about ten lines of dialogue before you get the award, so keep her yapping.</p>	<p><b>Prince Of Persia</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Up Against It</b></p>  <p>During a fight, lure an enemy towards a wall to see on-screen prompts. Finish the resulting mini-game to get this Trophy.</p>	
<p><b>Warhawk</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Ground Pounder</b></p>  <p>Complete Warhawk's ground combat training. This will take all of five minutes to get through.</p>	<p><b>Super Stardust HD</b></p> <p><b>Silver - Scenic Route</b></p>  <p>To get this easy silver Trophy, complete a whole planet - from start to boss phase - without using your booster (<b>R2</b>).</p>	<p><b>Super Stardust HD</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Hero Of Lave</b></p>  <p>To get this Trophy simply complete the first level. To make it extra painless, play it on easy - you'll still score the Trophy.</p>	<p><b>Super Stardust HD</b></p> <p><b>Silver - The Tokenizer</b></p>  <p>Collect five tokens with a single boost. Boost through the large asteroids and you'll pick this one up fairly quickly.</p>	
<p><b>Warhawk</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Combat Driver</b></p>  <p>Complete the vehicle combat training. As with Ground Pounder, this will take a matter of minutes only.</p>	<p><b>Warhawk</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Pilots Licence</b></p>  <p>Finishing the Warhawk combat training mission will net you the last of Warhawk's easy Trophy trio.</p>	<p><b>Wipeout HD</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - One gold medal won, 86 to go...</b></p>  <p>Get a gold medal by coming first in any race. This shouldn't be too hard in Wipeout's earlier tracks.</p>	<p><b>Wipeout HD</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Smile Please</b></p>  <p>Switch to photo mode during a race, take a snap and save it to your HDD to get this Trophy.</p>	<p><b>Wipeout HD</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Rookie Reward</b></p>  <p>Win any race with the Pilot Assist function activated. You can turn this on in the options menu.</p>
<p><b>Alone In The Dark: Inferno</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Blackout</b></p>  <p>Finish the first chapter of the game without skipping any sequences. You can rush through it in about 15 minutes.</p>	<p><b>Burnout Paradise</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Visit A Paint Shop</b></p>  <p>As the title suggests, you can earn this before starting your first race. Just find a paint shop on the map and drive through it.</p>	<p><b>Burnout Paradise</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Repair Your Car</b></p>  <p>Simply drive through any auto repair stop. You can do this almost immediately after starting a new game.</p>	<p><b>Burnout Paradise</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Win A Race</b></p>  <p>Just fire up Burnout, find yourself an easy race, win it and this shiny Trophy is all yours. Easy.</p>	<p><b>Burnout Paradise</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Perform Three Takedowns</b></p>  <p>Start any Road Rage match and take out three opponents. You don't have to do this consecutively to get the award.</p>
<p><b>Alone In The Dark: Inferno</b></p> <p><b>Silver - Cockpit Addict</b></p>  <p>Skip forward to the 59th Street driving mission and complete the whole sequence using the in-car camera.</p>	<p><b>Call Of Duty: World At War</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Saved Private Ryan</b></p>  <p>About ten minutes into the first mission, you'll hear Roebuck yell "Save Ryan!" Shoot the Japanese soldier before he kills him.</p>	<p><b>Call Of Duty: World At War</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Close Shave</b></p>  <p>Survive a banzai attack. You'll get your chance when the enemy soldiers disguised as dead GIs spring to life.</p>	<p><b>Call Of Duty: World At War</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Get Your Left Foot Wet</b></p>  <p>Complete any mission in an online campaign co-op game. You have to finish it completely to get the Trophy. Don't make that face.</p>	<p><b>Call Of Duty: World At War</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Get Your Right Foot Wet</b></p>  <p>Complete any of World At War's missions in an online competitive co-op game to win this Trophy.</p>
<p><b>Alone In The Dark: Inferno</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - The Blind Man</b></p>  <p>Go through the interactive intro sequence without clicking the stick to blink and clear your vision.</p>	<p><b>Skate 2</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Gender Bender</b></p>  <p>You can get this before you've even started the game. When you create your skater, simply choose a female character.</p>	<p><b>Skate 2</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Skater Evolved</b></p>  <p>Just step off your board - easy. This is unavoidable really, as you're forced to do this in one of the early tutorial missions.</p>	<p><b>Skate 2</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - I Like To Move It</b></p>  <p>Move an object, like a dumpster or a bench. Like Skater Evolved, you're shown how to do this in an early tutorial.</p>	<p><b>Skate 2</b></p> <p><b>Bronze - Need For Speed</b></p>  <p>Simply maintain maximum speed - two pushes will do this - for five seconds. Now to admire your bulging Trophy cabinet...</p>

Next month in...

# PlayStation®

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## God Of War III

The big man is back!  
Huge exclusive feature

PS  
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**feature**

PlayStation Home

How to  
find  
friends  
in  
five  
people



PS  
058



make



and

nice



Determined to discover everything Home had to offer, we ordered Nathan Ditum to spend an entire day in there...





spend ages  
trying to  
make my  
Home  
avatar look like me.

Messy hair. Tired eyes. Cardigan covering late-20s paunch. If I'm going to do this, I want to do it properly. The thing about all the responses to Home you've read so far is that whether they're positive, negative or medium, they don't really come close to the core of Sony's long awaited combination of social application, networking nexus and mini-game parlour. A ten-minute walkabout makes that much clear. To drill down into the heart of Home, to understand the people, to explore the interactive world, to appreciate the weird appeal of spending actual money on a digital pair of trousers, you need more than a furtive peek. You need to clock up some *serious* hours inside, preferably – for the whole going native effect – consecutively. Which is why we decided that one of us should spend a full nine-to-five day inside, walking the spotless streets, talking to other users and trying to make sense of Sony's brave new world, and how I found myself logging on as team\_opm at 9:34 on a Wednesday morning in January.

## Working from Home

There are currently five main areas in Home – a commercial hub called the shopping centre, a cinema showing trailers and news, a bowling alley with arcade machines, your customised and private personal space and, linking all of these, the central square. The plan is for further areas to be created by advertisers and game publishers, like the Red Bull zone, which opened shortly after my visit, or the Uncharted space in the American version of Home.

You spawn, initially, in the shopping centre. It looks like Bluewater would if the only people who went inside were cleaners, with bright white shop fronts, spotless floors and walls, and a smattering of airport-style design features – a twisting glass staircase, a stepping-stone pool and waterfall. It

makes sense that we've ended up with a virtual everyplace given the need to appeal to the varying tastes

of PS3's differing markets – Europe, Japan, America – but the first impression is that it's a *little bit* like hanging out in Logan's Run.

Except with more dancing. As I walk around I find the shopping centre is split over two levels, with a handful of shops divided between the two – clothes and real estate upstairs, furniture and interior design below. More shops are promised in the future, with high street chains invited to open their own virtual stores (Diesel is the first to book its place) but for now most of the action happens in the glow of the giant advertising screen overlooking the steps to the first floor. When I rock up it's showing a looped ad for *Locoroco 2* and the effect is apparently irresistible. About a dozen people are gathered underneath, within range of the game's jittering and infectious music, locked into various types of dance – rave, cabbage patch, running man. Maybe this is what the world looked like before they invented discotheques.

It really *is* infectious – I figure out the menu shortcuts and launch into an idiot salsa within seconds of seeing the cavorting crowd. There's something immediate and gratifying about dancing in online worlds, as anyone who's played *World Of Warcraft* will know. It's the simplest and quickest way to communicate with the people around you. The connection's brief ('You're dancing? Now I'm dancing! This is amazing! Alright, what's next?') but shows that people are drawn to Home to connect and mingle with each other. And it also reflects the fact that talking with actual words can be a bit fiddly. Sensibly, you have to be PSN friends with someone to actually speak to them with a headset, so most people are typing to each other, and unless you have a USB keyboard this can be pretty slow.

## Sharing, caring

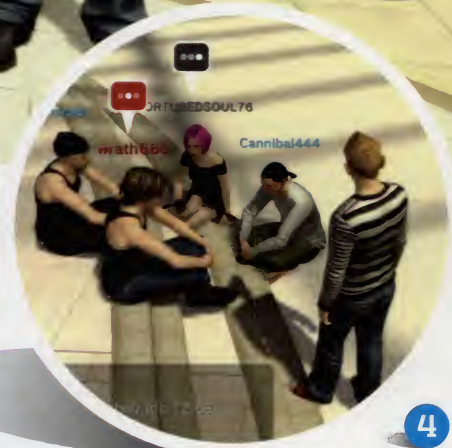
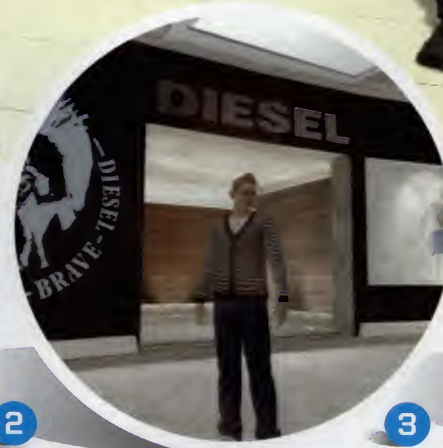
A side effect is that as I drift away from the endless disco and wander around the shiny-floored mall I unintentionally eavesdrop on dozens of conversations, which are playing out in proximity-triggered text bubbles floating over speakers' heads. I know this is the internet and everything, but the candour of some of these discussions is astonishing – one I stumble across on my travels is an in-depth back and forth between two (maybe) women about their depression and mental health issues. Just to make things more surreal both of them are somehow suspended in mid-air above the water feature – a glitch ►



1

**The world of Home explained**

The custom avatar options 1 are deep and flexible, with sliding face feature edit tools that make it possible to recreate yourself fairly accurately, like Nath did 2. While he spent the day dressed in his typical jeans and knitwear combination, only paying for a pair of red Converse-style high-tops, there's an extensive wardrobe available, including items from the first third-party retailer to open an in-Home store, Diesel 3. Interestingly, this means social groups can mimic their real-life dress sense, like this group of metallers 4 discussing which Iron Maiden singer was the best while all wearing black vests. The result of conversations like this is that you may want to spend lots of time alone 5.

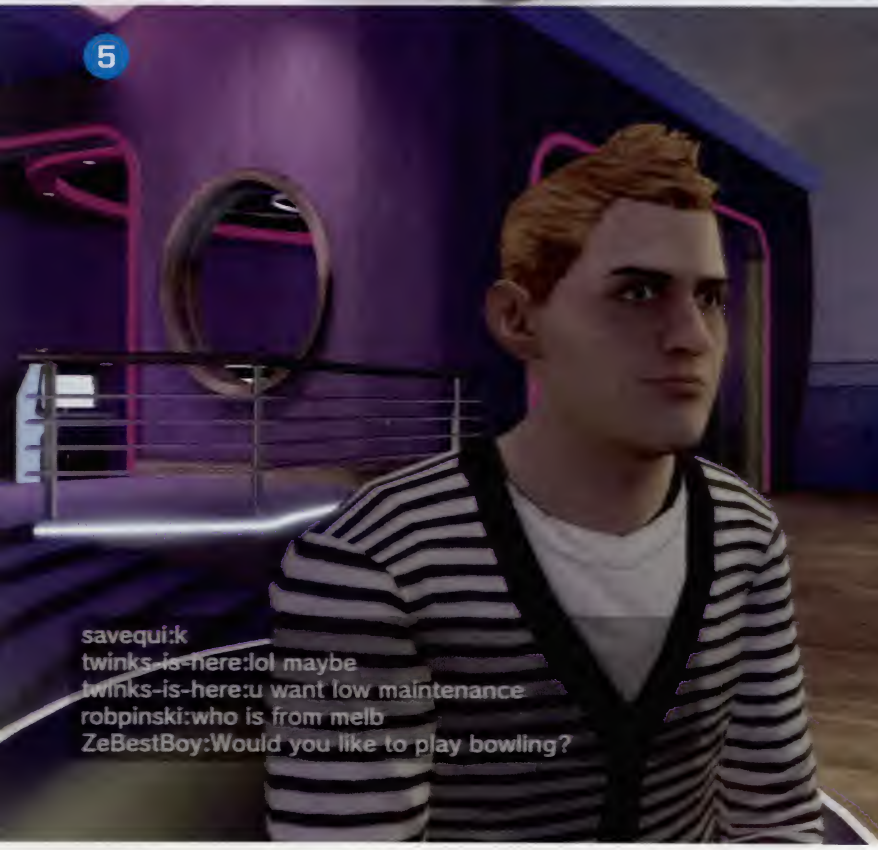


2

3

4

5



savequi:k  
twinks-is-here:lol maybe  
twinks-is-here:u want low maintenance  
robpinski:who is from melb  
ZeBestBoy:Would you like to play bowling?



# feature

## PlayStation Home

of some kind? – as their psychic histories play out in multicoloured text clouds. Very surreal.

It occurs to me that I should get some virtual air, so I head out into the main square. This triggers a fairly lengthy loading screen – presumably because of the plan to continually add new ‘spaces’, Home is downloaded area by area as you enter somewhere new. The square itself is bright and open, with a small seating area in the middle with tables for playing chess and draughts with other users (I decide a game of chess will take too long, then huff out halfway through losing at draughts having somehow forgotten the rules and let my opponent get three kings).

Looking for somewhere to go, my choices are: personal space (I haven’t decorated it yet and I’m putting it off like housework), bowling alley and cinema. I choose the cinema because it’s nearer, covered with bright lights, and I’m lazy and suggestible. Inside it looks like a real theatre, with posters and video screens

promoting what’s currently showing – a Watchmen trailer, some Eurogamer stuff. Not thrilling in itself, but there’s an excitement to it all being live and updateable, even if I’m not sure what exactly I’d choose to sit and watch in a *virtual* cinema.

Back outside there are more screens – another looped PSP ad with its own clutch of jiving merrymakers, and a Red Bull hoarding showing footage of the company’s promotional stunt plane (a Red Bull space with a flying mini-game is put up the day after my visit). I’m looking at the plane and making childish noises – “Neeeeooooow” – when an Australian man called Jasonn1973 tells me he’s seen it at an air show in real life. “In Perth,” he says, which along with the sunglasses, hair and tan is how I know he’s Australian. I tell him. He laughs. “I actually made this dude like me.” “I tried,” I reply, “but I’m not sure I got the desperation in the eyes right.”

Bonding over, we decide to go bowling,

picking up a third player on the way over to the entrance on the opposite side of the square to the shopping centre. Sadly, I lose my friends on the way in – I have to download the new area – so I’m alone when I reach the inside, which is dimly lit just like a real bowling alley and punctuated with splashes of neon and some arcade cabinets. The others are long gone, so I try to get a lane. But there’s a problem – they’re all full. All the lanes are full *in this virtual bowling alley*. It’s like running out of ink in Microsoft Word.

### Going spare

To be fair, lanes become available every few minutes, but I don’t want to wait and decide to have a go on the arcade machines instead. I play a miniature version of Enochrome – three levels, new shadowy enemies to misdirect – and it’s brilliant. Short and addictive and fun. Hopefully this is exactly the sort of thing Sony will expand on as time goes

## Game spaces

### Current and upcoming

Sony has invited other publishers to create spaces within Home themed around their games, with downloadable content and mini-games. Currently the only live game spaces are on the US and Japanese versions of Home, although that looks set to change with the release of EA’s upcoming Sports Complex.



#### Uncharted

Available on the US Store, the Uncharted game space takes the shape of Sully’s Bar. It has three hidden rooms (getting in using secret codes unlocks rare items for your personal space) and a simple arcade version of Uncharted.



#### Motorstorm

A themed living space, this is a premium (paid-for) alternative to the regular apartment or Summer House. It sits on a cliff overlooking an animated race.



#### EA Sports

The EA Sports Complex is the most ambitious space revealed to date. Representing all of the publisher’s sports games, the space includes track racing, poker mini-games and a lofty central auditorium.

#### Far Cry 2

The Far Cry 2 space was released during Home’s closed, US beta trial, featuring environments from the game and a multiplayer version of board game Mancala.



▲ The Red Bull area and stunt plane mini-game were added to Home after it went live.

on, giving us more games, more distractions, more *stuff* to do while we're hanging out.

But I'm supposed to be being a virtual Michael Palin, not having fun, so I quit the game and wander around the alley. A creepy guy wearing the same carefully chosen (and free) cardigan as me is feeding preposterous lines to a short lady avatar. "I am a personal trainer," he says, apparently unmotivated. "I can go all nyt lol." "What, exercising?" I interject, determined to undermine his clownish innuendo. The lady gives me a laugh, "Haha team\_opm," but the fitness idiot moves in anyway, shoving his avatar forward so it meshes unpleasantly with the girl's. "Mmmmmhhmmmm," he types. In an attempt to undermine this douche, I decide to push into them and make an unholy pile of digital bodies. "Mmmhhmm x 2," I say enthusiastically. "Wit you on m8," he

complains, but the girl carries on laughing and asks if I want to hang out.

It feels like a massive victory, and I dream briefly about how the outside world should be like this too, where you can trump lump-headed buffoons and win over women with a couple of gags and a USB keyboard. I see similar things happening throughout my visit – not overtly weird, just an ever so slightly uncomfortable press of listless men on outnumbered women. I chat to a woman called lil\_LADY\_titch about whether the constant male attention bothers her. She's used to it, she says, from playing Call Of Duty 4 online. "You wouldn't believe the amount of friend requests I get." I ask what's the worst chat up line she's heard on Home so far. "Am I a parking ticket was the weirdest." Wait, what? "Cos you got fine written all over you."

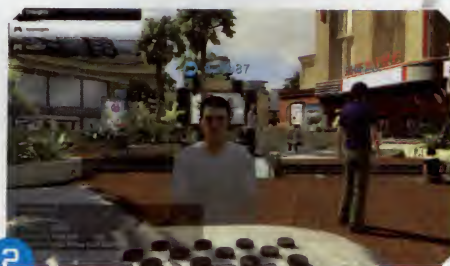
All the attention seems especially weird ▶

## Close encounters of the unkind

The three strangest things that happened during our day in Home



1



2



3

1 Before Nath had any time to acclimatise to the social nuances of Home he was confronted by the surreal image of two floating women discussing their depression in wince-inducing detail. One of them was standing inside a bubble machine, but despite their chattiness with one another, they didn't want to talk. 2 This guy thought he was the big man. He wasn't. Winning at draughts does not make you the big man. Making two stupid mistakes, getting furious and walking away from the match – that makes you the big man. 3 The bowling alley incident. Nath stood up to a fresh-mouthed flirter and won the affections of the lady. Mostly because he couldn't spell properly, but hey, a win's a win.

given how many people I see during the day switching from male to female avatars – there's no way to tell who's really a man and who's really a woman. But people do it anyway. There's some base, lizard brain reaction going on here – you (alright, I) automatically scan every room you enter, subliminally marking the position of the opposite sex because interacting with them just seems more appealing. I guess it's a bit like being in prison in that the big guys with firetruck arms know that their 'wife' is really a second-hand car dealer from Luton called Wayne who got caught defrauding his taxes. But in the present, out of the real-world circumstances, it's the closest they're going to get.

### Back to mine

It's after lunch by this point and definitely time to decorate my personal space. I head back to the shops. I like the idea of inviting a guest back to my place but it's difficult to do without feeling like you're stepping over an invisible boundary. I decide to buy something cool that I can use as social currency. Once you're inside the shops they're presented just like the PlayStation Store, with familiar menus and funds drawn directly from your wallet. The furniture on offer seems to be based on the work of real designers – Alster Chair by Emmanuel Dietrich and Ligne Roset – but I only have eyes for an ornamental stack of samurai swords and a model fighter jet. I'm ready.

After a couple of false starts I find bigph11, who turns out to be a reader and guesses from my PSN name that I'm from OPM. "Bought it yesterday," he says happily. "Seen u in the mag." I invite him to take a look at my "sweet samurai sword stack" and we head up to my otherwise barren pad. Unwisely perhaps, I then decide to turn myself into an attractive



# "Ever the nervous hostess I dance for my guests."

Asian girl, partly in a clumsy attempt to gauge Phil's reaction and partly because I've been on for a few hours now and I fancy a change. By way of apology I stage some photos out on the balcony for us to remember each other by, and say goodbye. If you're reading this, I'm sorry, Phil. I went a bit mad.

To save the day I have a grand idea – to stage a Trinny and Susannah-style 'lots of people coming together' moment, only with less nudity and fat people. I decide to splash out on a luxury Summer House personal space and to organise a party inside. Confident that my new female form will provide the necessary

lure, I spend a frantic hour circulating around Home spreading the word to groups of people. "There's a party in my Summer House! Everyone's invited." An hour later and with a slightly disappointing dozen new friends I'm all set to send out the invites. But then I panic – what if my friends can't get into my Summer House unless they've bought one of their own? Or they get stuck outside like I did at the bowling alley? I switch the venue at the last minute and invite everyone to my regular apartment. What happens next is a disaster. Only seven guests arrive. "Where's the Summer House?" they ask immediately. Ever the eager hostess, I ask

## Sorry, Phil, it's all got a bit out of hand

We play risky gender politics with a valued reader



1



2



3

1 Wanting to learn about inviting friends back to his personal space, Nath met OPM reader Phil outside the apartment block in the main square while looking for a likely candidate. The 'do you want to see my sweet samurai sword rack' gambit sealed the deal. 2 Tired and brain-stretched after hours in Home, Nath carelessly decided to test Phil's reaction to him suddenly transforming into a woman. To his eternal credit, Phil was a perfect gentleman, if a little confused. 3 Nath apologised and, with neither of them really knowing what to say as they looked out over the virtual harbour, he took a picture as a keepsake. Nath promised to make things up to Phil with a game of FIFA 'some time'.





Inside the Summer House, the premium private space with wood flooring, split-level design and a gorgeous lakeside view. Not pictured: Nath's sweet samurai sword rack.

them to sit down and start dancing for them. Oh, God, it's gone wrong. A couple of them start clapping, and, realising I need to put a stop to things I change back into the first preset male avatar I can find. Everyone leaves.

### Hitting bottom

So much for the big send off. But it's still been a big day. For all the absurdity and shy-kids-on-prom-night socialising, the bottom line is that Home plugs a weakness in PS3's online setup by offering an always-open lobby that makes connecting with friends really easy. Let's be honest, trying to keep a party together, or even knowing when your mates have come online, has, in the past, been a bit tricky. Home makes it dead simple – log in, chuck out an invite, hang about, float above a water feature, then play.

No, it's not revolutionary. And yes, I went a bit unusual at the end. But the thing is you're not supposed to play it all day. You're not supposed to *play* it at all. It really is like an airport, in that, for the most part, it's a place you pass through on the way to somewhere else. And once it's properly up and running, with third-party shops and spaces, Trophy connectivity and seamless access to games, it'll do its job brilliantly, fleshing out the 'in-between games' bit of playing online.

And the key thing is that the core functional bit that will make playing PS3 online better is free. Yes, you can spring for a virtual suit and trousers, but everything that costs is entirely optional. Even with bowling queues and a few grab-handed teenage boys, how can you complain about that?



## How to build a dream Home

Six ways to improve Sony's network app

Release the existing game spaces on the European Home. We need more things to do and more places to go.

Give us a nightclub – with drinks, lights and bubble machine – so the people under the Locoroco screens have somewhere to dance.

Put some premium content on at the cinema – something we can't see elsewhere else. We'd happily pay for that.

Give us more mini arcade games in the bowling alley.



Sort out 3D Trophies for display in our personal space.



Don't make us queue for virtual games. It doesn't make it feel more realistic, it's just madness.

In the mood for...

# Zombies

When there's no more room in hell the dead will walk on PlayStation

You can't ask for better target practice than the undead. A never-ending parade of lumbering meat bags you can shoot guilt-free because 1) they're already dead, and 2) somebody's got to do it or they start stinking up the place. Resident Evil might have made them famous, but PlayStation is crawling with zombies – from Oblivion's medieval shufflers to the Headcrab monstrosities of Half-Life 2 and Siren's screaming Shibito. Here, then, are six of the best walking corpses on PS3. Warning: they're a bit bitey.

## Headcrab Zombie (Half-life 2)

The worst thing about these shambling, blood-stained messes isn't the alien parasite that's swallowed their heads. No, it's the muffled, pleading screaming you can hear coming from inside. Are they still alive in there? Best use the famous Gravity Gun to fire paint tins and saw blades at them until they're quiet.

## T-virus Zombie (Resident Evil)

The T-virus was the Umbrella Corp's first go at creating a biological weapon. It combines with the victim's cells, killing them but producing enough energy to reanimate the resulting corpse. It also damages the hypothalamus to produce an overdose of rage-inducing hormones. Now available on prescription.

PS  
066

# intermission

A tasty PlayStation snack



## Shibito (Siren: Blood Curse)

As zombies go, the Shibito are unsettling because so much of their humanity remains intact. Use the series' sightjacking ability and you can see through their eyes and watch as they pant through a shambolic approximation of their former lives. But don't be fooled: they're capable of running, using weapons and – oh great – opening doors.



## Zombies (The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion)

These Romero-like moaners stumble through Oblivion's dungeons and caves. Their appearance is bad enough, but they're also riddled with diseases to catch. Also available in 'Headless' and 'Dread' varieties. The latter's healing ability makes it almost impossible to kill without some seriously apocalyptic magic.



## Der Untoten (Call Of Duty World At War)

We weren't huge fans of Treyarch's work on the latest COD, but there's no denying the idiot genius of Nazi zombies. Speedy and prone to 28 Days Later-style shaking fits, they turn up in a bonus game after the main campaign, and besiege a small bunker, tearing boards off the windows to get at the juicy GIs inside.



## PMC Soldiers (MGS4: Guns Of The Patriots)

More homage than an actual undead invasion. Liquid Ocelot's attempts to take over the SOP system – a nanomachine network implanted into soldiers worldwide – has an unusual side effect in South America. With their brains fried the enemy become moaning zombies who try to overpower Snake.

## Now have your say

Any other examples we should have exhumed? Email us at [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com) and tell us. Here are some that didn't make the cut.

■ The Grims in Resistance 2 might behave like fast zombies but they're just not dead enough.

■ Dead Space's Necromorphs are reanimated bodies, but they're mutated alien monsters so don't really count.

■ Return To Castle Wolfenstein's zombs are scary, but beaten by Call Of Duty's coffin dodgers.

**OPM**  
interview



# Guerrilla tactics



What's it like to spend four years developing the most important game on PS3? Producer Steven Ter Heide and games director Herman Hulst re-live it all...

**How have you coped with all the hype over the last four years?**

Herman Hulst: The old expression is, if people stop talking about you, you start getting worried. The amount of interest and the nature of the feedback we've had from forums, consumers and the press has been truly phenomenal. Of course, the internet is a big, wild place – you can't listen to every comment. We certainly don't do that.

**In what ways has the PS3 hardware allowed you to realise your ambitions with Killzone 2?**

HH: The kind of things we're doing really utilise what PlayStation is good at. A large format like Blu-ray allows us to not skimp on anything. We pour our hearts into everything from the textures to the size of the levels and the amount of localisations we can get on the disc, and we didn't have to make any concessions; that's great. On the other hand, things like Sixaxis, the idea that PS3 is online and it's free for everybody to use... Those kind of things, the values that

are important to PlayStation, we relate to. In the end, we wanted to make a very ambitious title that shows off our vision, and PlayStation helped us to realise that.

**Is there anything in the game that you feel is unique to PS3?**

HH: I think the sheer combination of things that we've got going on: the effects, the level of detail, the sheer number of players, all of that combined is such a humongous job that at some points we're using all of the SPEs [synergistic processing elements] to make sure we're getting the right performance. So it's across the board. That's what Killzone is all about, it's making sure we tick every box – fantastic looking, playing and sounding. It's bringing all of that together.

**Which rival shooters have you been playing at Guerrilla?**

HH: We play all the big shooters, from Call Of Duty to Resistance to Gears Of

“We wanted to make an ambitious title that shows off our vision.”



War. We analyse them, their points of interest, their solutions. I think clearly the recent title has had the most traction and that was reflected in the number of hours played by Guerrilla staffers on Call Of Duty 4. That's what we enjoy most. We've played it a lot. But we're not just taking inspiration from other shooters. We've set up movie nights on Fridays, and we analyse what they're doing in special effects, cinematic storytelling... it's not like we're focussed on one particular competitive product.

### **You seem to have used a lot of post-processing effects. Did that come from watching movies?**

Steven Ter Heide: We borrow a lot from movies; we look at how they frame their shots and the effects they apply in terms of lighting and how they layer things. Killzone's all about that cinematic feeling. We try and bring that into a real-time environment, which is scary because you need a lot of processing power to pull that off. So with post-processing, it's really important for us to bring something to the table in terms of player experience. It could be using the post-processing effects to show the actual hit indicator, so the screen greys out or just gets a little bit more blurry once you get shot.

[There are also] the more subtle things you need for environmental storytelling, so you can dynamically change the setting according to where the player is in the story and how he progresses through the levels – we make it a little bit darker, a little bit more ominous, and that can all change dynamically. That's what Killzone is known for, that sort of unique art style, and post-processing really allows us to bring together all those different building blocks, all those elements, and make it seem like it's all part of the same picture. And then we'd layer all these special effects to create an atmosphere... because obviously we want the player to experience what it's like to be on Helghan. It's a hostile world – it's a bit science fiction but it still feels familiar. From dust storms to lightning, it's all things that people can relate to. But as soon as you don't hit that spot, it's off-putting, it's jarring and it pulls you out of the experience.

### **Does the player's freedom make it harder to create something cinematic?**

STH: How do we get the attention focussed on the right spot? A lot of different systems help there. Audio occlusion pulls you in the direction that you're meant to be looking – we've got full directional sound so you can hear if someone's coming behind you; it's really subtle but it helps the player orient themselves. We've got sections where we take the camera control away from the user because we have to show them something

important. But really, what we'd like to do is put it right there so it's very difficult *not* to look at it, and we do that by using the sort of things that they use in movies, like approaching it from the lighting perspective; anything that is lighter will naturally draw the eye so you want to make sure that the path is always lit correctly. The art director and the lighting team put a lot of effort into making sure you're heading in the right direction.

### **The enemies seem to be easier to kill in the final code. Was this a response to feedback from previews?**

HH: I'm not sure in this case, but we make a big deal of user testing. As early as we can, we get a build out to as many people as we can in our target audience. We do that continuously so it's possible that we've reacted to that but that's only if we found that to be across the board.

### **What happened in the final months of tuning and testing?**

HH: Since early 2008 there have been design

has also brought up some things: we need to reduce the number of enemies, or the bullets need to do more damage, or your buddies need to be more useful. It's those kinds of things that user testing brings out, because after looking at your own game for so long you become blinded to certain things.

### **Did play-testing result in any major changes – like re-arranging levels?**

STH: One of the important things we do is that we have an Occurrence Sheet, which maps out where things occur in the game. When we notice that we need to introduce something fresh, we look at our Occurrence Sheet and maybe bring forward this one weapon... So we do change the gameplay and the mechanics but only to a certain extent because obviously you can't change the geometry – it's really labour intensive to do those kind of things. But the Occurrence Sheet is a great help – it gives you an overview of where things are introduced in the game and whether you've got the right pacing, and we check that against user

“If you wanna see what your PS3 is capable of, go and get Killzone 2.”

tweaks, obviously. We talked about the impact of bullets, all these kinds of primary design decisions. But we were also debugging our AI code – I'm sure that the behaviour of our enemies has improved significantly. And that's something that's been picked up relatively late in the game.

### **But it feels like there was a real boost in quality in the last month or so...**

HH: You need to have all of the pieces fall into place before you can judge where you stand. Even things like the final audio coming in and being added to a battle enhance the experience dramatically. So it's really those final tweaks – when the music's in, the voices are in, the bullet damage has been adjusted, the hit responses have been tweaked... all of a sudden, the overall experience feels dramatically different.

### **How do you judge which tweaks are essential and which are just fiddling?**

STH: Obviously our directors take educated guesses on things. But the proof's in the pudding and you have to have a lot of eyeballs on the game to properly appreciate whether something has worked. And the user testing

testing to see whether they start to wander off or lose interest – we just sort of rethink where we can introduce things.

### **Were there any major lessons learned while developing Killzone that you applied to the sequel?**

HH: Loads of them! Obviously when the title came out, we've analysed all the reviews, did some testing on it... There are some core values that we've kept in place – the art style, the graphical quality. But gameplay wise, we've made a great deal of improvements – the quality of the enemy behaviour, the AI... so many things.

STH: We wanted to build on the strengths that people perceive in Killzone – the art style, the weight of the weapons. But we also thought, can we push that first-person immersion a lot more? There are a couple of minor innovations that we did with the original Killzone. We did a lot of things in first-person – the ladder climbing, the camera movement when you were walking – all those things added weight to your presence in the world.

Obviously there were a lot of flaws that we thought we could improve, like repetitive speech or the AI not being up to speed. A lot of

work went into analysing those kind of areas and seeing what we needed to do to improve. Not just reading the reviews, but actually every employee that comes in, they have to play through Killzone and I ask, "What are your impressions? What would you do differently?" And they take that on board and improve that for Killzone 2.

HH: One thing that we changed was this decision [to feature] multiple playable characters. We decided to have one and make that a very polished experience, not spreading our resources, which was a lesson learned from Killzone 1.

### Was co-op planned at any point?

HH: Of course we considered these kind of things, but at the end of the day, we focussed on creating a very rich experience around the things that you find now [in the final game].

### Were any key features dropped during the development process?

HH: We're taking inventory of those things right now. If I were getting more specific we'd maybe get into future plans too much.

### So can we expect those features to crop up in DLC, or another sequel?

STH: Down the road, DLC is definitely another option to include things that have fallen off the table. In terms of things we could have improved or better utilised, everybody picked up on the exoskeleton in the later levels. That was a great experience that was a lot of fun. Can we have more of that in the game? Can we do more with it? I think when you look at it and ask, 'Why is it fun right there?' it's because of what went before and what follows it, so it's a little sweet deal – if you have that throughout the game it kind of loses its value and impact.

### There was no jump button in Killzone. Why did you add one in the sequel?

STH: A lot of people asked, "Why is there no jump?" So we implemented [it into] the game and hardly anyone's using the jump! So we're like, "What?! We made it and you're not using it! Why?!" So during play-testing we said, well, let's see if we can force people to use it a little more or see if we can make it part of some of the environments, where you actually *have* to jump. But the motion capture and trying to get that feeling of weight... I really have to compliment the animation guys because it's a tough job, especially in first-person, to make it feel right and not make you throw up every time you jump!

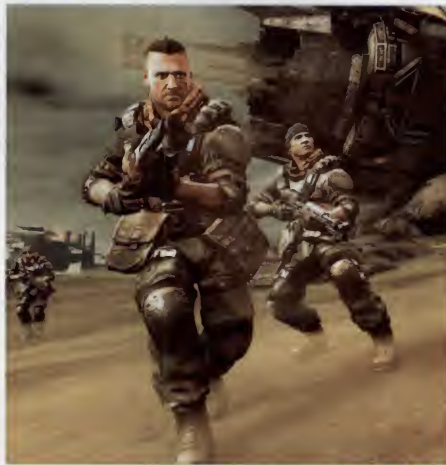
### On the subject of jumping, what do you think of Mirror's Edge?

STH: I still think there are lots of different ways you can explore in the genre and



## Who are... Guerrilla

Formed in 2000 and based in Amsterdam, Guerrilla Games was the result of a merger between three Dutch development studios. The team began Killzone in 2002, exploiting the intense hardware knowledge of its programmers, many of whom were veterans of the European demo coding scene, to push PS2. Two years later, Guerrilla signed an exclusive development deal with Sony, and started work on a sequel...



Mirror's Edge experimented with some of these very well. Everyone who played the demo just thought, 'this is really good, it's got some speed, it's got some weight, it's fun.' [The challenge is] to keep it fresh and build on those strengths That's the difficult thing for every game, to build on your strengths and keep it fresh throughout.

### How did you develop the cover system in Killzone 2?

HH: That actually came from one of our game designers. He just spent a weekend with a camera behind his couch, and he showed up, pulled our game director into a room and said, "Look! Some people claim you can't do it but I've just proven that we can!" So he was tasked with developing it. All credit to him. He developed it further, but then the coders, the game director, everybody just gets involved in making sure that it's actually going to be feasible and fun.

### What do you think is the key element of a good first-person shooter?

STH: Keeping it in first-person, making sure that you feel that you're part of the action, that you're immersed in it – that's a key thing to get right because as soon as you're pulled out of the experience, it's over. It's a shooter – 80% of the time you're pulling a trigger and firing a weapon and that has to be really satisfying. Trying to get all of the systems aligned to make the shooting right, to make every bullet have an impact on the world, is the biggest thing that we focussed on. It sounds really basic but if you look at the systems we developed – like the hit response system where you really see your bullet doing damage to your enemies and you see where you're hitting them and their responses to it – those things are really important. That's what a shooter is all about.

### What's your personal favourite moment in Killzone 2?

STH: For me, it would be the opening of the Suljeva village level. For a good third of the level, nothing's happening, there are no enemies. It's very rewarding to see people play that because they've just been through these hectic firefights and all of a sudden they're in this barren wasteland, there's nothing going on, but they're still on edge and thinking anything could happen, they're really carefully edging round the corners and everything. It's really great to have that kind of feeling in a game.

### So, why should people buy Killzone 2?

HH: I think we've made good progress with getting the maximum out of the machine. If you wanna see what your PS3 is capable of at the moment, then go and get Killzone 2.

**feature**  
inFamous



# Hail



# disorder

It's rubber gloves time as we get an electrifying, world-first playtest of inFamous, the new superhero sim from Sony



**WORLD  
EXCLUSIVE  
FEATURE**  
PlayStation.  
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**I**t's your classic good news, bad news situation. The good news is you've survived a massive explosion that has destroyed much of Empire City – an explosion that has somehow also given you amazing electrical super powers in the process. The bad news is the ruined metropolis is in turmoil and everyone is blaming you, the guy with lightning bolts coming out of his fingertips. And while their suspicion is perhaps understandable, it's not making finding out what the hell has happened to you and your hometown any easier. So begins inFamous, Sucker Punch's dark take on the superhero genre. This is our first chance to play one of PS3's biggest exclusives. Fingers? Tingling ever so slightly.

If inFamous were a Hollywood blockbuster, its star, Cole MacGrath, would be played by Jason Statham – all scowl-voiced and number one cut. Unlike most action heroes, however, he can't carry a gun (his electric touch makes gunpowder ignite) or drive an expensive car (electricity + petrol = instant DIY cremation) but that doesn't mean he can't kick ass. With his sparky powers he can cause massive damage – blowing up vehicles and frying enemies – or he can do good deeds, like acting as a human defibrillator or rejuicing areas of the City during a power cut.

## Watt's the deal?

We're immediately given a chance to unleash his electricker, as Cole is learning how to use his newfound powers. He's holed up on the roof of friend Zeke's apartment building, recovering from the blast that transformed him into a human dynamo. Zeke wants to watch some TV but the generators are out, so it's up to you to spark it back to life by moving around the rooftop and recharging the dead generators. Hardly challenging, but an easy introduction to targeting and channelling



“Cole is like a Jedi without all the pseudo hippy BS.”

power – likely to play a huge part in later stages. At the same time we get to frazzle a bunch of mannequins Zeke has set up for target practice, and seeing their heads pop off as a result is genuinely amusing. But we haven't got time to hang around, laughing at our own handiwork; the cartoons on Zeke's TV are soon interrupted by a jacker whose homebrew broadcast announces that a food drop is about to take place in Archer Square. Given that the city's chaotic state has closed every restaurant and supermarket, it's time to go grab some chow.

On our way to the drop Zeke insists on a little detour. Someone has left Cole's survivalist pal a new gun under a car, so you stop to pick it up – only to discover 20 possible vehicles it could be under. This might be a problem for mere mortals, but for Cole it's a chance to show off another power: his EMS blast. It's a shockwave that can push heavy objects or attackers out of the way, and here it's employed to flip the cars over until Zeke finds his gun. It feels like being a Jedi without the sackcloth robes and pseudo hippy BS, and it teaches us an important lesson; it's real easy to run out of juice. Handily Cole can recharge at any big electrical output – just hit L3 to see sources glow with eerie blue light then **R2** to suck the voltage right out of them. In a pinch you can use cars for a quick top up, but for a full charge it pays to find fuse boxes and street lamps.

## Spark life

At Archer's Square we find the food drop hanging from a giant statue, so we climb up to reach it. Cole can shimmy up poles



▲ Cole's electrical super powers are incredibly potent but do require him to recharge using Empire City's power grid.

  
**EXCLUSIVE  
SHOTS**  
PlayStation.  
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▲ With Cole's powers comes a dilemma – does he help others or just tear the place up? Can't we do both?

Lara-style just by jumping towards them, and climb like Assassin's Creed Altair – automatically grabbing ledges and window sills to haul himself up. He can even steer himself in midair after a big leap or fall, making it easy to jump from street lamp to sign to wall. The cover system works seamlessly with the climbing, so you can duck behind street lamps as you're scaling them, or hang behind signs to shield yourself from bullets. It's a snappy, Uncharted-style mechanic that makes you look a lot slicker than you really are. This trick comes in handy

when we meet the Reapers, Cole's biggest problem when he's exploring the city. See, the same blast that gave Cole his powers has turned former junkies and gang members into a tribe of machine gun-wielding, hoodie-wearing miscreants. These Reapers will steal anything and kill anyone who gets in their way. Understandably peeved at Cole beating them to the drop, a bunch of them open fire and in response we fry them with lightning bolts, the electricity paralyzing them momentarily. When they get too close an EMS blast sends them ▶



▲ The same explosion that gives Cole his powers also messed with Empire City's junkies, gangsters and scumbags.

## Q&A

Brian Fleming,  
producer, Sucker Punch



**How have things been since we talked six months ago? Has a lot changed since then?**

You wouldn't believe me if I told you how much has been built, changed, and improved over the last six months. Virtually every aspect of the game is better, runs faster, and of course there's tons more to do in Empire City.

**Can you tell us what went into the decision to base Cole's superpowers on electricity?**

Electricity was one of the strong candidates for us from the beginning... Clearly it wasn't our only idea though, so we did what we always do – which is start trying things. We prototyped some electricity powers, and of course some other powers too, and started playing with them in test worlds, in combat. After our first couple rounds of prototyping, electricity was visually strong, and playing strong, so we start doing focused brainstorming around that, and then the really good stuff started coming up. 'Hey, we can use it to revive dead guys on the street! Oh yeah, we can power up dead machinery! Hey, the entire city's electricity grid can be simulated, we can use that!' And when you hit that stage – where brainstorming meetings are turning out great, usable ideas, that's when you know you're onto something.

**It's been a while since we heard about any of the enemies Cole will be facing. Can you describe any of them to us today?**

Well, there's all sorts of enemies, as you probably expect. You've seen the Reaper gang, but not their leader. You've probably also not seen all the different unit types in the Reaper gang either, so let me assure you that the grunts with guns, and the taller, teleporting elites, those are just two of four unit types of that one gang. And, of course, the boss of the Reapers – we haven't talked about her yet. We'll talk more about the other gangs as we get a bit closer to launch too, so stay tuned!

**Can you give us a quick bio for each of Cole's sidekicks and give us an idea of how they'll help you during the game?**

I think helpers is probably the wrong way to look at the cast – they're involved, important, but independent of Cole. Well so far, we've introduced Zeke, conspiracy theorist, survivalist and Cole's blood brother. He'll fight alongside you at times, but you know, Zeke's his own man, so don't expect that to be super common. Trish is Cole's on-again/off-again girlfriend, a med student, and one who can really sharpen the point of some of Cole's moral dilemmas in the game. Moya is the law, she's outside the quarantined parts of Empire City, but has decent intelligence reports, and strikes a deal with Cole to clear his name if he keeps his end of the bargain.

**How do you make both the good and evil paths through the game rewarding? In Bioshock, it felt like there was a slight imbalance where it was more rewarding to do good than bad – is this something you're addressing? Will you get different endings depending on your morals?**

I think of it less as separate narrative paths, more of appropriate experiences and responses. We try to give you a little taste of what it's like to be famous, or infamous. It's not as if, in one ending, the city blows to smithereens and in the other it becomes a utopia. That 'fork the story' approach is not what holds our interest as storytellers. What we like is the little stuff – the people passing you on the street and taking your picture, or ganging up on you to try to exact revenge. The endings can indeed be different, but that's not really the point we're trying to make.



### Extreme climbing

Like Altair in Assassin's Creed, Cole is an expert climber - his skills turn Empire City into one big climbing frame.



### The Force is strong

The EMS blast and killer voltage attacks bear an uncanny resemblance to Star Wars: The Force Unleashed's Jedi powers.



### Lightning strikes

Roast Reapers with your finger lightning and it's very reminiscent of frying the Splicers in Bioshock.



## In the mix

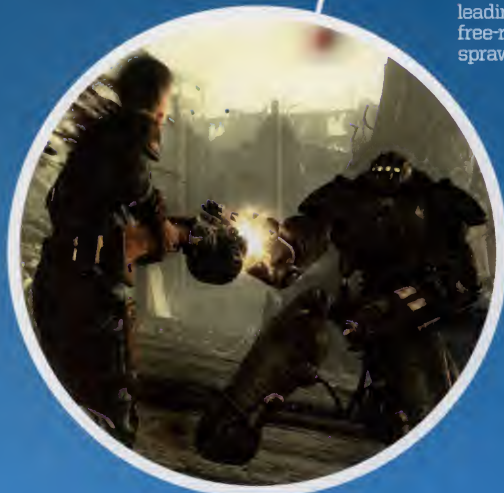
inFamous has some famous influences

### Naughty or nice?

Fallout 3 had karma, and inFamous gives you the same opportunity to use your intimidating talents to be a hero or villain.

### Open world

Okay, so Niko's no superhero, but Cole's a similarly ambiguous leading man and the free-roaming, urban sprawl is classic GTA.



flying backwards, and for the finale we climb back up the statue in order to pull off something called a Meteor Drop - a move that sends Cole slamming into the ground with concrete-shattering force. It knocks out any Reapers in the blast radius, and looks ten kinds of awesome. Cole has some mean melee attacks too, punching and kicking like a prize fighter and back-flipping away to avoid getting shot. You might think melee attacks are pointless on a superhero, but you'll be glad of it when you run out of sparks. We had to recharge three times before we cleared all the Reapers out and it was safe to collect the UN-funded Pot Noodles.

### Transformer man

With the basics grasped it's time to try something a little trickier, so we jump to a mission later in the game.

The Reapers have taken a group of people hostage and locked them up in a train. The power is out on the railway but Moya, an FBI agent who's promised to aid Cole if he helps track down her missing husband, points out that with his abilities he can power up the train again. What you have to do is jump up on the first carriage and keep the engine running until you reach a station further down the line. It's not that simple in practice,

► Cole's main mission is to find the source of his amazing new powers.



of course, because you also have to blast lightning bolts at any Reapers flanking the route. Further along the track there's debris that needs clearing – easily done with a sharp eye and a well-placed EMS blast – while at several points you're forced to temporarily abandon the hostages and go down to street level to find and recharge the broken power boxes, all while fending off more Reapers.

Clearly, there's an element of repetition but the carefully pitched difficulty curve kept us wanting more. Suicide bombers are the

► Electricity is great, but sadly it's not very effective at cushioning you from huge drops...

most infuriating type of Reaper; they come out of nowhere before exploding inches away, unless you drop them instantly with an EMS blast before they go kaboom. There's also a super-elite Conduit Reaper, who has similar powers to Cole and dresses in a white-coat and skull-mask ensemble. He's almost impossible to get rid of, constantly leaping back to his feet whenever he appears beaten, and teleporting around the roof of the train

like a satanic David Copperfield. Even a newly developed skill – throwing energy grenades around like tennis balls – fails to prevent multiple deaths.

### The shock of the new

Eventually – thanks to diligence and [cough] the game's mercifully forgiving checkpoint system – we make it though, pulling the train into a packed station and returning the hostages to their families. That's the end of the hands-on, and although it's hard to get a real handle on just how open-world two inFamous really is from playing through two isolated chapters, there's a lot to like here, especially the nimble clambering around Empire City's skyline. The biggest question mark following our playtest concerns what other powers Cole will develop as he progresses; while his electrical abilities are great, making them feel constantly fresh throughout an entire game is going to be a big old challenge. With a summer release planned, we're not far from discovering whether developer Sucker Punch can meet it.



► So far the combat couldn't be going better, but Cole wasn't looking forward to getting his quarterly bill one bit.

# back issues

Feed your obsession



Sold Out

Issue #021  
August 2008

- Killzone 2
- Future of shooters special
- David Jaffe interview
- LittleBigPlanet



Sold Out

Issue #022  
September 2008

- Mirror's Edge
- Resident Evil 5
- Access All Areas @ E3
- Soulcalibur IV



Issue #023  
October 2008

- FIFA 09
- Street Fighter special
- Mercenaries 2: World In Flames
- Hideo Kojima interview



Sold Out

Issue #024  
November 2008

- LittleBigPlanet
- Operation Flashpoint 2: Dragon Rising
- inFamous
- PES 2009

# Back issues



Late to the party? There's no need to miss out...



Issue #025  
December 2008

- Resistance 2
- White Knight Chronicles
- LittleBigPlanet guide
- 42-page reviews blowout



Issue #026  
Christmas 2008

- Prince Of Persia
- Guitar Hero vs Rock Band
- Killzone 2
- PlayStation Network special



Issue #027  
January 2009

- Heavy Rain
- Uncharted 2: Among Thieves
- Resident Evil 5
- Overlord 2



Issue #028  
February 2009

- Killzone 2
- 2009 preview special
- God Of War III
- Kaz Hirai interview

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The OPM review setup



Our review code is tested on hi-def and standard-def TVs to ensure we know how games perform at both ends of the scale. Our HD setup is a 70" Sony Bravia with Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound.

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK  
**Reviews**



Your essential guide to every new release

For a generation of gamers who break out in a sweat at the sound of the green herb jingle, the arrival of Resident Evil 5 will be one of this year's early highlights. The big news is that, weirdly, the series isn't that scary any more. The good news is that it's more action-focused than ever, and the new co-op mode is a complete success. But that aside, should we expect more new stuff from such a high profile sequel?

Also exclusively reviewed this month is The Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena. It's dark like five seconds before the beginning of time, but just like the original Escape From Butcher Bay (also included as an HD remake), it's got a gritty, playable core and a cruel, compelling storyline.

On top of that we've got the near-perfectly constructed Street Fighter IV, paranormal shooter FEAR 2 Project Origin, PSN petal-'em-up Flower, the awesome but verbosely-named Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars and loads more.



80

**RESIDENT EVIL 5**

Out: darkness, and actually feeling properly scared. In: fancier explosions, sexy co-op lady, even bigger tentacled beasts. Seems like a fair trade to us.



86

**THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: AODA**

"Excuse me Mr Diesel, could you repeat that? You were speaking at a frequency only concrete and mountains can hear."



96

**STREET FIGHTER IV**

Just as soon as Street Fighter IV became the greatest fighting game on PS3, it wandered off to the local waterfall to practice. The ponce.

How we score our reviews...

**10 Essential**

Instant classic that's as close as it gets to PlayStation perfection.

**9 Outstanding**

Highly recommended, and an investment you won't regret.

**8 Very good**

Mostly excellent, but held back by one or two minor flaws.

**7 Good**

Enjoyable, but with definite room for improvement. Rent it first.

**6 Reasonable**

A decent offering, but one that only satisfies in places.

**5 Average**

A game that is both fun and frustrating in equal measure.

**4 Below average**

Too flawed to be anything more than a brief curiosity.

**3 Poor**

A seriously flawed game with no long-term appeal.

**2 Awful**

A disgrace to the bargain bin. Avoid it as you would a bullet.

**1 Horrific**

Buy this shocker and watch your console self-combust in protest.



**Our highest accolade**

The gold award is presented to any game that we feel demonstrates significant innovation, near flawless gameplay, great graphics and profound appeal.


Sheva and Chris are Resi's latest monster-fighting duo.



Buddy hell

# Resident Evil 5

The horror. The brightly lit, short-sleeved horror



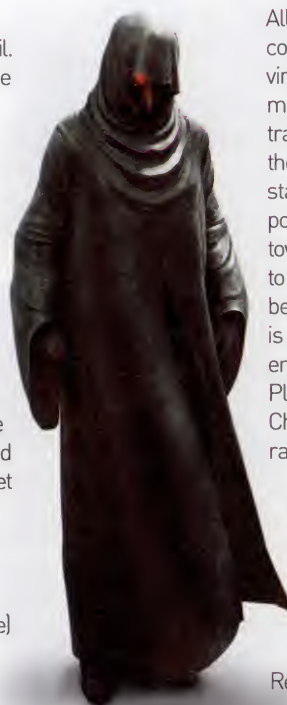
**Info**  
**Format:** PS3 **ETA:** 13 Mar **Pub:** Capcom **Dev:** Capcom **Players:** 1-2  
**Web:** residentevil.com **It's like:** Resi  
**Evil 4** goes on holiday. Sun, sea, sand and OH MY GOD WHAT IS THAT?!

Here's Resident Evil 5 in a nutshell: there are eight vicious, snarling faces advancing on you. They're waving broken bottles and machetes around while you desperately rifle through your supplies to discover you've got a red herb, a key, a beetle (don't ask) and half a clip of pistol ammo. Oh. So you form a plan – drop the nearest one with a head shot to buy precious seconds, kneecap a couple of the others to slow them down, and barge through the rest to the safety of the door beyond. Then you catch the single crazy, leering eye of the sack-headed, chainsaw-waving madman lurching around corner. Let's just check that inventory one more time...

Panicked crisis management has always been at the heart of Resident Evil. Are there enough bullets to deal with the marauding horde? Can I shuffle the inventory around to fit in that first aid spray without dropping anything? Oh God, oh God. Can. You. Just. Run. *Faster!* It's a fraught balancing act between fight and flight as you deal with possessed villagers and dogs with flapping tentacles where their mouths should be. Following Resi 4's series reboot, the fifth game replaces shuffling zombies with people infected by a parasite called Las Plagas. They're faster, brighter, handy with weapons and super interested in seeing what your wet bits look like on the outside.

### Be prepared

It all kicks off when Chris Redfield (of Resident Evil 1 and Code Veronica fame) arrives in Africa working for the Bioterrorism Security Assessment



Alliance, or BSAA. Umbrella, the evil corporation specialising in zombifying viruses from the earlier games, is no more but its legacy lives on in a thriving trade in illegal biological weapons. Buy the My First Flesh-Melting Bacteria starter kit and get a free mop! With intel pointing to a major deal going down in the township of Kijuju, Redfield's dropped in to check things out. It doesn't take long before the worst is confirmed. The place is crawling with Majini, a genetically engineered evolution of Resi 4's Las Plagas infected, and within minutes Chris is up to his enormous biceps in rampaging mutant villagers.

At least he's no longer alone thanks to Sheva Alomar, a local BSAA agent who joins him as his partner and, more importantly, adds co-op (online or split screen) for the first time in the series. It's a genius stroke because there's something about Resi's twitchy shoot-outs that works ▶





081



♥ You can play co-op with a mate online or split-screen.



▲ Resi 5's sunny setting looks great, but it also means things aren't so scary anymore.

really well with a friend. It feels good when battling rabid crowds to know someone's got your back, and tackling the Majini together creates great moments. Watching a psycho's head explode seconds away from slicing you up because your mate saw you defenceless as you fumbled for a new clip is a primo bonding moment.

Several sections force you to split up, taking alternate routes. Usually one of you has to reach a switch or door while your distant teammate tries to keep the

▲ The infected give chase on bikes in one of the many brilliant set-pieces.

worst of the heat off your back with the rifle. These sequences, combined with the sheer number of red-eyed Majini you encounter, mean you soon learn to rely on one another – enemies can grab you, meaning your mate must free you with a well placed punch or kick. Elsewhere you can be mortally wounded, your life bar slowly draining away unless you're revived in time. You can also swap equipment between characters, creating a sense of co-dependency when it comes to ammo, health and guns. The interplay between players is engineered well enough to make it feel like co-op is how the game is meant to be played. The



♥ **It takes two**  
Anticipating your mate's moves as you take out monsters is ace and, surprisingly, saving their ass feels genuinely rewarding.



♥ **A hit!**  
Stunning opponents now lets you get in a jaw-shattering punch. Invaluable when you're surrounded or running out of precious ammo.



♥ **Past life**  
Poke around and you will uncover files and diaries that reveal the early history of both Umbrella and its viral research.

### LOVING

### HATING

#### The inventory

Trying to swap weapons, reload or use health is literally murderous when people are trying to hit you with farming tools.



#### The crowbarred cover-system

The final sections against AK-toting infected rely on a weak cover system that all but kills the fun.



whole thing feels like a monster-themed buddy movie, as funny as it is gory. One minute it's all desperate pleas for help as you're battered by a Majini and your mate heroically wades in. The next you're bickering about ammo – "Give me the shotgun shells." "No, I need them." "But you don't even *have* a shotgun!"

### Wait, on three?

The constant threat and forward momentum make this one of the most enjoyable co-op experiences we've played in ages. With two of you pushing and pulling you don't want to be exploring multiple routes, getting lost or generally faffing about in a wide open space. So the restricted level design is welcome,

## The first 3 hours in... Resident Evil 5



00.05 hours

#### A bad start

Chris arrives in Kijuju and meets up with his new partner Sheva. There's a sinister atmosphere and the locals are none too friendly to outsiders.



01.00 hours

#### Hit the ground running

The pair soon stumble on a man apparently being attacked. He's actually being infected with a parasite and turns instantly on Chris.



01.45 hours

#### Down boy

Beyond the village the two find an old train yard. It turns out people aren't the only things affected as they run into a pack of monster dogs.



02.10 hours

#### A new breed

While everything points to the Las Plagas from Resident Evil 4 these parasites are different. They can leave a dying host and fly to keep attacking.



03.00 hours

#### WTF is that?

There's also a new bio-weapon in town. After finding the slaughtered bodies of a back-up team, Chris meets their killer: a massive seething worm creature.

Sheva picked a bad time to nip off to the ladies.



keeping you focused on your objectives (which are, admittedly, nearly always about opening the next door). There are a few hiccups when playing with a friend. In single-player Sheva occasionally offers up hints to help you complete a goal. That's absent when a mate takes over, and could potentially leave you in the lurch, wondering what to do next. Naturally, the ability to save one other – either from attacks or by reviving a dying partner – is also impossible when the game's objectives force you to split up. It can mean repetitive, exasperating deaths when faced with some of the more dangerous, one-hit-kill creatures.

There is good news for the antisocial: the game works just as well in single-player mode. Sheva's AI is all but flawless. She never gets lost, kills loads of enemies and always heals you. Almost without exception she gets the job done. So if anything *does* go wrong it's nearly always your fault – not a great basis for a loving relationship, but just what you need here. One thing that's disastrous, whether you're playing alone or with company, is dipping into your inventory 'live'. Previous games paused the action, enabling you take as long as you wanted to sort out your gear. Now you can't and it's monumentally frustrating. Trying to open up the menu and find something when all hell is breaking loose means an

### Castlist

#### The hero



**Chris**  
Resi 1 survivor Chris Redfield now tracks down illegal bio-weapons.

#### The partner



**Sheva**  
A member of the BSAA like Chris, Sheva Alomar is his contact in Africa.

#### The friend



**Josh**  
Sheva's former mentor and the only member of his team to survive.

#### The dealer



**Irving**  
Responsible for the African outbreak, Irving sees it as a business opportunity.

**"Sheva's AI is all but flawless – she nearly always gets the job done."**

almost certain outbreak of rusty axe to the skull. It leads to a tactic where you keep running away to buy just enough time to dig out whatever you're after. In cramped locations it gets laughable as you leg it past enemies, fiddle with your guns for a second, run a bit more when they catch up, have another go and so on. All that's missing is the Benny Hill Yackety Sax music. You can assign favourite weapons and first aid to the D-pad to speed up the process a little but with only four hot keys there will always be something crucial you have to leave out. Also frustrating is the fact that, unlike *every other game*, **○** is the 'give' button rather than 'cancel'. As such it's far too easy to accidentally hand vital equipment to Sheva in the middle of a crisis.

Story-wise things pelt along. The village Chris and Sheva are investigating quickly erupts into a bloody, violent place. The Majini are everywhere, and psychopathic, rioting mobs threaten to overpower you at every turn as you fight through dusty settlements and small abandoned towns. After the first trailer was accused of racial insensitivity, Capcom appears to have dropped extra ethnic groups into the African setting. These include spaghetti western Mexicans with big moustaches, and suntanned Germans. It's a little weird and seems like a half-hearted reaction – all the women are still African, and once out of the towns you only encounter black enemies. In any event, it's all rendered irrelevant by one level in which you visit ▶



▶ The chainsaw-wielding infected are nasty. Shoot first and... Basically just keep shooting.



▶ Like all bad dogs he'll chew your slippers. Only he won't wait for you to take them off first.



**2up**  
second opinion

**Name** Tim Clark

**Angle** Resident Evil ultrafan

"Given the departure of Resi 4's maverick director, Shinji Mikami, it's no surprise that this is mainly a retread of that game's innovations. But the genuinely brilliant addition of co-op play, and the lavish visuals, mean I couldn't care less. Basically I love Resi like my own heavily-armed, mad-eyed son and just want to spend more time in its mad universe. Which is essentially why I'm not allowed to review it."

**Best for...**

Zombiephiles (ie any man over 18)



▲ Chris makes a classic mistake when dealing with mutated crocodiles – namely not running away like a baby.



▲ El Gigante is back and bigger. Liking the beard, not so much the constant urge to SMASH!



▲ Get caught by an enemy and you'll be very happy to have a partner to boot you free.

tribal villages inhabited by spear-throwing infected wearing grass skirts. The imagery is undeniably clumsy, and even the addition of another strong black hero, Sheva's friend Josh, fails to redress the awkwardness.

For the most part, though, the new African setting makes for an exciting change. The combination of sun-drenched environments with the military back-up offered by the BSAA means that Resi has shed its 'isolated hero in a haunted house' roots in favour of ballsy action peppered with Michael Bay-style explosions and big-fisted set-pieces. It definitely contains 'scenes of mild peril' but on the panic scale it registers slightly below 'thinking you've lost your keys before realising they're in a different pocket'. As you push on in search of answers, locations expand to include a

claustrophobic train yard full of mutant dogs, a mountain pass, scientific base, tunnel complexes, oil tanker and a swamp full of crocodiles – introducing an element of exploration as you zoom between villages on an airboat. There's also a beautiful on-rails shooting section

as you speed across the desert in a Jeep, pursued by Majini on motorbikes and trucks. It's scary but it's fast and dramatic and more than justifies the move away from traditional survival horror.

### Keep 'em coming

Early on the set-pieces keep coming: sieges, chases, boats, cars. There's always something new just around the corner. But as you move towards the climax, motifs start to repeat. For instance, a lot of levels are built around the same template: you can see the switch you need to hit but have to walk around in a bit of a circle to reach it. Then, when you do hit the switch, a load of enemies appear and you have to fight your way back. You soon get a feel for the invisible lines that trigger the next event. So keys, objects and new weapons are nearly always hot-wired to a Majini horde or rampaging flesh beast somewhere.

Because of these repetitive mechanics the later levels start to drag. There are still exciting moments and a couple of brilliantly atmospheric show-stoppers but familiarity introduces an element of fatigue. Things also start to unravel in terms of continuity. The last quarter of the game makes a big deal out of a cover system that's barely been touched upon

## Know your enemy

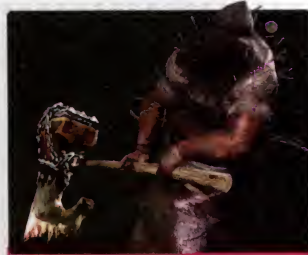
Meet the nastiest monsters in Resident Evil 5



### CHAINSAW MAJINI

This mad cackling giant appears several times during the game and is only really interested in cutting your head off. The rupturing skin is a sign of advanced infection by a parasitic bio-weapon.

<b>Weapon</b>	A bloody chainsaw
<b>Toughness</b>	Can be killed. <i>Eventually</i>
<b>Weakness</b>	Many, many bullets
<b>Best tactic</b>	Shoot in the knees
<b>Infected with</b>	Las Plagas
<b>Listen out for</b>	Petrol engine and giggling



### THE EXECUTIONER

He only appears once at the start of the game but he's lethal. He's also almost impossible to kill so the best way to survive is to stay out of the range of that enormous axe until help arrives. A lot of help.

<b>Weapon</b>	12-foot axe
<b>Toughness</b>	Don't waste your energy
<b>Weakness</b>	Exploding barrels
<b>Best tactic</b>	Run
<b>Infected with</b>	Las Plagas
<b>Listen out for</b>	Something being dragged



### TENTACLE MONSTER

These intelligent, writhing swarms of worms appear a few times and are loosely man-shaped. They can lash out over long distances and break up into pieces to hide or launch sneak attacks.

<b>Weapon</b>	Whip-like arms
<b>Toughness</b>	Impervious to bullets
<b>Weakness</b>	Fire
<b>Best tactic</b>	Incinerate
<b>Infected with</b>	Unknown
<b>Listen out for</b>	Slithering

These buggers attack in overwhelming swarms.

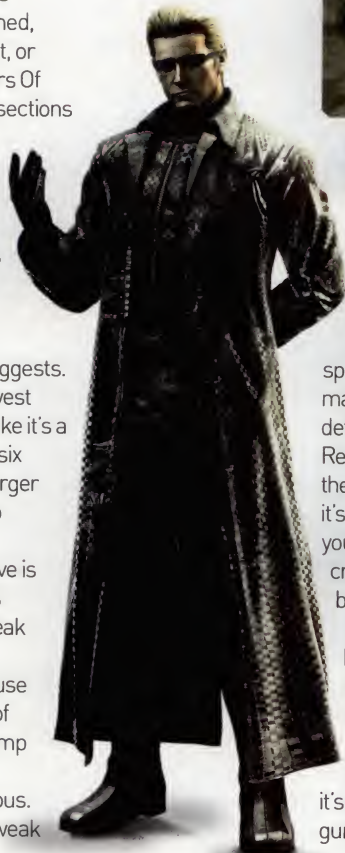


anywhere else. It's poorly implemented, only allowing you to hide behind certain objects, and it's hard to say whether it was added because the designers thought the increasingly well-armed, trigger-happy enemies required it, or they'd just seen the sales for Gears Of War 2. Either way the gun-heavy sections late on can be tough work. The controls have been updated to a traditional two-stick, third-person scheme rather than the one-stick movement from Resi 4, but you still can't move *and* shoot at the same time, which means it just can't live up to the shooter expectations the cover system suggests.

It doesn't help that even the lowest grade, Majini can absorb bullets like it's a pleasure. We counted one taking six headshots before going down. Larger enemies can drain all your ammo without so much as flinching.

The unfairly steep difficulty curve is particularly noticeable in the boss fights. Shooting all the glowing weak spots and finding gaps in attack patterns is fun to begin with because you're always in control, capable of taking on whatever misshapen lump is trying to suck your eyes out. Further in, however, it gets laborious. One creature keeps respawning weak

Chief villain Wesker returns but exactly what is he trying to achieve in Africa?



Take too much damage and you'll be helpless until Sheva rescues you.



Push into the African wilderness and you'll find the outbreak has even reached remote villages.

spots, which is *definitely* cheating, while another has you jumping through hoops like a sad dolphin. The final encounter is also a crushing disappointment. Don't worry, I won't spoil it for you, but it's meant to be a massively important battle that definitively brings certain parts of Resident Evil's story arc to a close. But the frustrating difficulty and the fact that it's almost impossible to work out what you're meant to be doing makes for a crushing finale that's a joy to see the back of for all the wrong reasons.

That this sticks rigidly to Resident Evil 4's template is both its greatest strength and biggest weakness.

When Resi 5 is good it's amazing. The desperate gunplay is even more exciting

when there are two of you fighting side by side. And it looks lovely, with repulsively detailed monsters (including a surprise cameo from an old favourite) and some beautiful locations – a mountain road lit by a baleful orange sunset is a particular highlight. But the fact remains that, in too many ways this is identical to the last game. That's not necessarily a bad thing – Resident Evil 4 is one of greatest games ever made because it rewrote the rules for action games, setting a template for everything from Dead Space to Dark

Sector. Because of that this is still a damn near essential purchase. It's just a shame that the lack of evolution means it occasionally feels like it's lagging behind the very competitors it inspired.

Leon Hurley





**WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW**  
PlayStation  
Official Magazine • UK

Dark place

# The Chronicles Of Riddick Assault On Dark Athena

Vin Diesel stars in a prison break double bill

Perhaps unsurprisingly for a man whose voice sounds like an enormous saw being dragged slowly through knotted oak, Riddick has had a hard time explaining himself. Is his new game a remake? An expansion pack? A sequel? Thanks to its tortuous route to release (ditched by the newly formed Activision Blizzard last summer

and in limbo for several months until Atari stepped in) the answer's all three. The original Xbox exclusive *Escape From Butcher Bay* is included as a high-definition remake – developer Starbreeze's primary aim all along – but is joined by an entirely new sequel, *Assault On Dark Athena*, which started as a modest extra and grew to full game size as Starbreeze waited for Atari's cheque to arrive. So don't pay too much attention to the title – *The Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena* – and instead concentrate on the fact that you're getting two games for the price of one, and, despite some creaks in the aging engine, they're both really good.

*Dark Athena*, the newer and fresher-feeling of the two, is the headline act. The plot is pitched after the events of *Escape To Butcher Bay*, with grizzly future con Riddick floating through space alongside his nemesis and mercenary captor, Johns (played throughout, silently, by the



**Info**  
 Format PS3 ETA 27 Mar Pub Atari Dev Starbreeze Players 1  
 Web riddickgame.com It's like Watching Aliens and The Great Escape in the dark with a knife.

sleeping face of Cole Hauser). They're picked up by a rogue mercenary ship, *Dark Athena*, home to another of Riddick's old friends, the cruel-faced space bitch *Revas*, and to some awful goings-on involving pillaging, far-flung colonies and robotic zombies. The cryo-slumbering Johns is taken prisoner while Riddick evades detection, and sets out to escape his new prison.

### Things that go bump

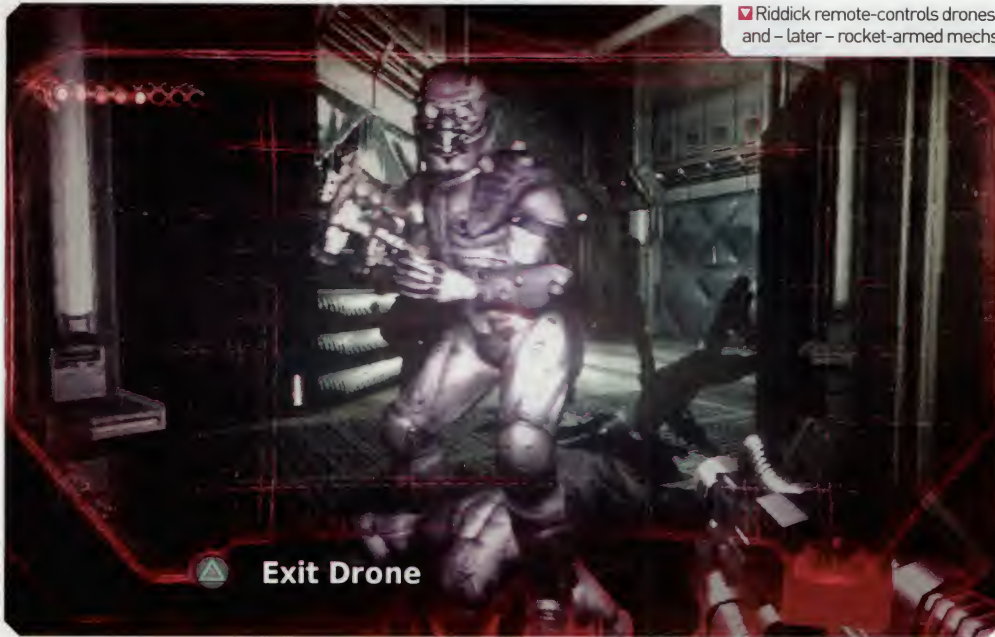
All of which is an excuse to get you creeping around dark spaces stabbing people in the neck again. *Dark Athena* is shaped like a first-person shooter, but – like *Butcher Bay* – is more geared

## Brutality-o-Meter

Just how mean is Riddick?



The Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena



Riddick remote-controls drones and – later – rocket-armed mechs.



Landing from a great height isn't a problem, as long as you have a soft man to break your fall.



Butcher Bay's been given an impressive facelift. Shame it's still so perpetually bloody dark.



Snap a drone's neck and you can turn his gun on your remaining enemies.

"You're getting two full games here, both dark and complex."

constantly) before you nail the timing on a counter blow after your weapons flash white, and end your opponent with a gruesome finisher. It feels chunky, but as first-person punch-ups go, it's no clumsier than, say, *Mirror's Edge*, and has a greater variety of blows and blocks.

The shooting is much more standard issue, with corridor-heavy encounters, a jerky but serviceable cover-and-peek system and scattershot guns which make precision kills difficult. Or, at least, it would be standard issue if not for the tranquilliser gun, an electric stun pistol that freezes enemies and makes sparks dance over them like when R2 is shocked by the Jawas in *Star Wars*. The key thing is that the ammo is unlimited and the targeting remarkably pinpoint, so instead of going properly loud when facing a crowd, you can isolate guards from a distance and then creep up to give them an unhappy finish.

Shadows over us

There are a few complaints. For all the polish work, *Dark Athena's* foundations are clearly those of a much older game. The visuals hold up (although they rely heavily on atmospheric shadow and torchlight) but the nuts and bolts of the game – fighting, climbing, creeping – are all pretty much identical to *Butcher*

Bay. And there's a massive, unwarranted difficulty spike that comes just after the halfway point (you'll recognise this – it's when the game apparently ends, before a wrenching, story-extending plot twist) with the arrival of crawling spider turrets that are nearly invisible and kill you almost instantly. Of course they do.

Crucially, *Dark Athena* keeps you playing. There's a moreish quality to the solid stealth and shooting gameplay, and the story is full of intriguingly unpleasant details (the robo-zombies are fascinating) fleshed out with some unexpectedly lively acting (Lance Henriksen brings the show to life as Riddick's weary cohort Dacher). Add to that a sequence of old-fashioned but refreshingly imaginative boss battles – the sort of interactive climax *Resistance 2* lacked – and you've got a highly recommended whole. And that's without *Escape From Butcher Bay*, of course, which is the graphic equal of *Dark Athena* but feels understandably older.

We've concentrated on the new material here because *Escape From Butcher Bay* is a known entity and offers essentially the same experience, but it's absolutely worth bearing in mind when weighing up a purchase: you're getting two full games here, both dark and complex, and both well worth playing.

Nathan Ditum

towards stealth and hand-to-hand combat. The stealth is uncomplicated and works well, partly because there's none of the 'am I in cover or poking out slightly?' nonsense you sometimes suffer in other games – you press **C** to crouch into hidey mode and the screen tints blue when you're out of sight, and partly because the dirty industrial design of the ship makes creeping around *really* fun. It's dark and uncompromising, built around an *Aliens*-style vision of a technologically advanced but decrepit future, with murky cargo holds, grinding machinery and humming air-vents.

When you find enemies in these cramped spaces – especially early on, before the rifles and shotguns arrive – the results are short and brutal. Riddick's hand-to-hand weapons range from the sharp and pointy (screwdriver, combat knife, the curved and razor-sharp new Ulaks) to the heavy and reliable (lumpy, pulp-stained club) but in every case the fights play out much the same: a few hopeful strikes delivered from behind your block (**R2** – you'll be holding it

Like this? Play these



**Dead Space**  
Similar interstellar setting and desolate corridors, only prettier and with better combat.  
**VERDICT B**



**Condemned 2**  
Violent, story-driven, first-person adventure, which succeeds despite some technical glitches and a nonsense climax.  
**VERDICT B**



✔ This is what PlayStation Network is all about – tons of uncomplicated fun.



✔ The physics are insanely bouncy but enable you to pull off incredible goal-scoring acrobatics.



✔ Luck plays as big a part as skill, so people who moan about the keepers in PES should avoid.

Nitrous Anelka

# Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars

Stupid name = stupid amounts of fun

It comes as something of a surprise, given the admirably bombastic title, that there isn't a single weapon in this game. Nor are the vehicles particularly geared for battle. Indeed, Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars (hereafter known as Battle-Cars for the sake of our collective sanity) has done a superb job of hiding what kind of game it really is – namely mentalist football in which the players are all leaping, spinning cars.

The truth is Battle-Cars doesn't need any semantic tricks. It's easily one of the most polished titles on PSN, crammed with single-player diversions and a simple, but utterly compelling, online mode. The former consists of a series of mini-games designed to educate you in the basics of the cars. Like the offline stuff in Crash Commando it's fun all by



### Info

Format PSN  
download ETA Merch  
Pub Sony Dev Psyonix  
Studios Players 1-4  
Web battle-cars.com  
It's Like More fun  
than throwing a  
Subbuteo ball at your  
Scalextric set.

itself, but more importantly trains your brain for the chaos of the multiplayer. Starting with the fundamentals of boosting and jumping, it rapidly expands into the tricks and tactics you'll need to survive against other players, as well as unlocking more vehicles (sadly, there's little difference between any of them). It's genuinely surprising just how manoeuvrable the cars are, and initially you overshoot your mark and crash into walls a lot. But wise up to the gently-gently taps and nudges required and you'll be spinning on a sixpence while double-jumping.

### Crashing tackle

Just as well, because the meat of Battle-Cars is its online footy mode. Only slightly crazier than Scudamore's 39th game idiocy, this is the future: two teams of one to four cars line up, with a big ball in the middle, and try to score goals past each other. The ball looks like a Terminator's skull, but bounces around like a ferret on fire. Which, of course, is why you've learned those fancy

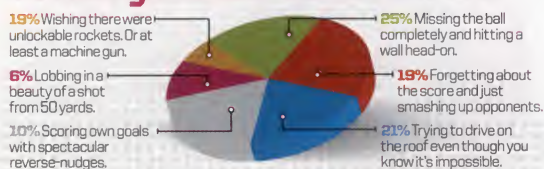
double-jumps, sideways twists and forward boosts. Keeping it away from your grasping opponents, whacking it in the vague direction of goal and trying not to smash into your teammates (harder than it sounds) results in total chaos.

Which is a very good thing. Tooling around with seven strangers quickly descends into the kind of daft nonsense that online play should be all about. There's no teabagging here, just a breathless rush for the ball, and the occasional moment of triumph when you fluke it into the net from your own goal line. So meant that.

Despite the finely-tuned controls and measured arenas, Battle-Cars is unapologetically haphazard – so whether you'll enjoy it depends very much on how seriously you take your leisure time. It doesn't have the kind of precision that rewards the most skilful players,

nor the depth that will allow the dedicated to dominate its arenas. It's simply fun. Not quite the total knockout we were hoping for, perhaps, but it's definitely a great knockabout. **Rich Stanton**

### What you do in... SARPBC







When science invents tiny ships that shoot germs it will look like this.

Bargain blaster

# Astro Tripper

A horizontal wave of mutation

**A**stro Tripper costs £3.19. £3.19! At that kind of price not earning a recommendation would involve somehow causing actual physical pain during play, and developer Pom Pom avoid that (admittedly unlikely) eventuality by a wide margin. The game itself is similar in feel to Mutant Storm, Pom Pom's shooter on PC and 360, with the same psychedelic retro look, dirty sound effects, and resilient alien ships that mutate into more aggressive forms unless killed.

This time, though, you can't shoot in every direction, just left and right. To help you fight the predictable (meant in a good, R-Type kind of way) waves of enemies, you've got two weapons: a blue laser that wipes out enemies directly ahead, and a red spread gun that, when fully powered-up, will take out a good half of the screen at a single stroke. The enemies are well designed, forcing you to use both, but with just 14 stages on offer, it's lucky that the three difficulty levels transform the game so completely.

## Lemon squeezey

Even easy isn't easy, though, and there's a slightly perverse learning curve. By the time you've struggled through the Training Grounds on the lowest setting, become accustomed to the game's slightly slippery inertia, and defeated the first and hardest (thanks to the harsh time limit) boss in the

### Info

Format PSN download **ETA**  
Out now **Pub** Pom Pom Games  
**Dev** Pom Pom Games **Players** 1  
**Web** pompomgames.com  
**It's like** Defender and Uridium, sitting in a tree...



The game's no looker, but it also costs exactly 1p less than a pint in our local.

game, the next two worlds are relatively stress-free. Only in the fourth and final world does it become something approaching mental again.

There's not such a rewarding bonus system as in Pom Pom's other games – the multiplier is lost between levels – but there are four (unexplained) challenge modes that move the focus away from progression and towards survival. They do add something, even if the fact you only get one life in these modes does make the game's slightly furry controls and accidental deaths annoying. Still, at this

crazy-low price, complaints have a hard time sticking – just be prepared to take on Astro Tripper's hardest levels if you want to get the most out of it. **Jon Blyth**



## PlayList

Essential tunes to download this month

### Morrissey I'm Throwing My Arms Around Paris

Format Track **ETA** Out now **Price** £0.79

I'm Throwing My Arms Around Paris finds Mozza pledging his heart to the capital of France because, as pop's most celebrated bachelor (sorry, Cliff) puts it, "Only stone and steel accept my love." And it's one of the people's poet's best in years. [myspace.com/morrissey](http://myspace.com/morrissey)



### The View Which Bitch?

Format Album **ETA** Now **Price** £7.99

Plucky young lads from Dryburgh in Dundee team up with Oasis producer Owen Morris and rattle out a suite of songs about girls, junkies, and, erm, their mate's crazy conspiracy theories (Jimmy's Crazy Conspiracies). With moments of elegiac concert piano and Wonderwall-style cello, though, there's more to Which Bitch? than rowdy lad-rock.

[myspace.com/dryburgh](http://myspace.com/dryburgh)



### Telepathe Dance Mother

Format Album **ETA** Out now **Price** £7.99

Not only do Busy Gangnes and Melissa Livaudais have the best names in pop, they might just have made one of 2009's most original albums. Spooky, futuristic R&B, it sounds like an episode of R Kelly's Trapped In The Closet re-recorded by ghosts. That's a recommendation. [myspace.com/telepathe](http://myspace.com/telepathe)

## Download of the month

### Frida Hyvonen Silence Is Wild

Format Album **ETA** Out now **Price** £7.99

Delectable piano pop from a Swedish singer-songwriter with shades of Regina Spektor, but boasting an eccentric charm of her own – whether she's singing about a Stegosaurus or yodelling wildly at the climax of Scandinavian Blonde. [myspace.com/fridahyvonen](http://myspace.com/fridahyvonen)



Swords and sandals

# Rise Of The Argonauts

Our oracle says beware of getting fleeced

Like a truck driver putting Corinthian columns on the front of his council house, this hack and slash RPG has fancy aspirations that, for the most part, are way above its station. Aspirations that involve lots of facial hair, some Greek myths and enough wittering on about feelings and sixth form philosophy to make Oprah look like a mute assassin.

It goes like this: you're King Jason, and you're after the Golden Fleece so you can reanimate your sadly murdered sweetheart. To find it, you're voyaging on your ship, the Argo, sailing from island to island with a crew seemingly assembled by randomly pulling names from the Greek Myths Cliff Notes – Achilles, Hercules, Medea.

### Gassy Greeks

Mostly your 'adventure' consists of chinwagging with gods, centaurs and old ladies using the multiple choice dialogue system (which is only multiple choice in the sense that you say different words – whichever option you choose you *always* sound like a hateful buffoon). Honestly, the game's biggest problem is that it's in love with the sound of its own faux-epic voice, so even if you steer clear

### Like this? Play these



**God Of War II**  
He might be a last-gen warrior, but Kratos is an expert at tearing the heads of mythical monsters.

**VERDICT 8**



**Conan**  
Girls, grunts and gore. What this action adventure lacks in depth it certainly makes up for in spectacle.

**VERDICT 7**



### Info

**Format** PS3 **ETA** Out now **Pub** Codemasters **Dev** Liquid Ent **Players** 1 **Web** [snipurl.com/8xjw6](http://snipurl.com/8xjw6) **It's like** A wordy Harryhausen movie.

of all the boring side quests ["Oi, Jason, could you tell this dead guy's wife he was a philandering git? Cheers."] you still have to endure an age of waffle before you can get violent. Maybe it's lazy exposition, maybe it's an honest attempt to share the Greek myths with the world, but it feels an awful lot like ye olde padding.

### Sweet release of death

Mercifully, the combat is a bit better. You get swords, maces and spears, and a crazy gang of enemies like archer satyrs and dark magicians to test them out on. It's pretty basic button mashing, with just a light and a heavy attack to alternate between, but the RPG frills let you spice things up. If you earn brownie points with the gods – by hauling up the menu screen and dedicating deeds to them – you can buy extra moves



▲ Special attacks, such as this fiery groin of death, are earned by sucking up to the gods.



▲ No, the Silver Surfer isn't an unlockable character, this is just some fancy magic armour.



▲ He might look dynamic in combat, but King Jason could talk the hind legs off a centaur.

like lightning attacks, or magic armour that coats you in silver skin. (The ancient Greek equivalent of wet look leggings.)

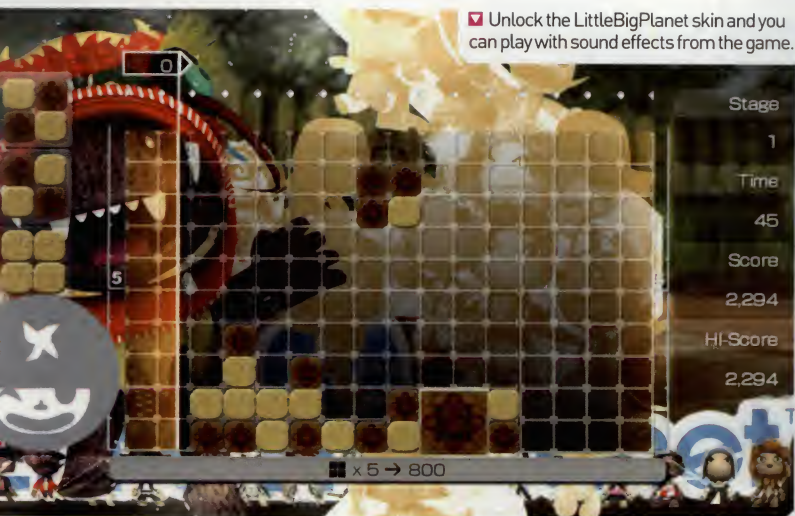
Great... if you had more chances to use them. Argonauts is at its best when its doing big-ticket set-pieces. Like the level in which you fight a huge, bloated Medusa, with giant black eels for hair instead of the regular snake barnet. It's ace – diving in-between the slimy serpents hacking and jabbing, avoiding their curling bodies and projectile poison – but it's over too soon, and you're back to the talk/slash/talk grind.

Shame, really. There are plenty of good ideas here – an island full of statues that creepily stir into life as you walk past them, a sinister child oracle with a pet griffin, and joke-cracking, pipe-smoking centaurs. But the ratio is all wrong.

There's just not enough guts to go with all the incessant gabbing – it takes more than a quick flash of an Ionian's innards to make up for a deathly boring 30-minute conversation with a peasant. This is not destined to join the pantheon of action greats.

**Rachel Penny**





Unlock the LittleBigPlanet skin and you can play with sound effects from the game.

Stage  
1  
Time  
45  
Score  
2,294  
HI Score  
2,294

Block buster

# Lumines Supernova

Yes! More of whatever it is 'Lumines' means

**D**isintegration, the less glamorous cousin of spontaneous combustion, is mostly best avoided. But in sexy block puzzler Lumines it provides sweet release. The deal is that two-by-two squares cascade into a grid and need to be organised into patterns before they disappear. So far, so puzzley – but here's why it's different to every other Tetris clone: the four parts of each block are randomly assigned one of two colours, and you need to rotate and place the blocks so the colours form clusters of four, before a bar of justice sweeps across the screen to dissolve them. The 'timed' bit is crucial – it's all set to music, with each turn and touch of the blocks triggering a track-specific set of sound effects. Play it right and it builds into a hypnotically rhythmic blur of colour and sound.

## Beat boxes

Supernova retains this basic shape and includes a few additional pieces. Dig Down mode, for example, gives you a screen filled with static blocks which you need to clear within a strict time limit. It's a nice change from the usual Lumines routine, but short with only 20 levels.

**Info**  
Format PSN download  
ETA March  
Pub Q Entertainment  
Dev Q Ent  
Players 1-2  
Web enipurl.com/9muqo  
It's like Playing Connect Four in a disco.



The Sequencer mode lets you make your own music from various loops and sounds.

And the Sequencer from Lumines II, which allows you to make and play along to your own tunes, is expanded to include over 100 different sounds (drums, bass, loads of random noises). It's still much simpler than a computer-based sequencer, but surprisingly versatile and magically makes everything sound okay. Ish.

Occasionally Supernova gets too flamboyant, bombarding you with the most garish moving background and audio (mis)matches. But even during the game's most extreme 'Jackson Pollock does gay disco' moments it's clearly all in the name of Fun.

Jonti Davies



## BluMovies

HD films to feed your next-gen disc player



### HSM3: Senior Year

Director Kenny Ortega Starring Zac Efron, Vanessa Hudgens ETA Out now

Drop your shield of cynicism for even a moment and this will charm you with the speed of a striking cobra. And that's a good thing. Since when was swooning to impossibly beautiful stars, crying every 15 minutes then googling Vanessa Hudgens a bad night in?



### Taken

Director Pierre Morel Starring Liam Neeson, Maggie Grace ETA Out now

When Neeson's Bambi-eyed daughter gets snatched he's left little choice but to fly to Europe and murder hundreds of Frenchmen, all the while keeping you on side with frequent pained looks to camera to show he's all broken inside. Fun, in a violent, stupid, xenophobic way.



### Death Proof/Planet Terror

Director Quentin Tarantino/Robert Rodriguez Starring Kurt Russell ETA Out now

Separate releases for the Grindhouse double bill that never quite was. As a conjoined whole the two films worked, but as standalone genre throwbacks they wobble, with Rodriguez's zombie freakout Planet Terror faring slightly better than Tarantino's dull roadkill.



### Movie of the month You Don't Mess With The Zohan

Director Dennis Dugan Starring Adam Sandler, John Turturro ETA Out now

Blending cock jokes with an 'alternative' commentary on the Israel/Palestine conflict, by rights this should be horrific. But Zohan takes some sharp digs at America's fears of non-Westerners, and Sandler's turn as the terrorist-hunter turned hairdresser is his best in years.



Girl trouble

# FEAR 2 Project Origin

Who you gonna call? Busy? Okay try the First Encounter Assault Recon

**C**ue the rousing montage music. Previously on FEAR: An army of telepathically-controlled clone soldiers built by experimental arms manufacturer Armacham go rogue and start murdering people. A lot. They're commanded by the gifted psychic – and bat-shit mental – Paxton Fettel, who, in between eating people's brains and consuming their memories, leads the troops to find scary apparition girl and telepathic freak, Alma... End music.

And that was basically the first game. You played the Point Man – a gun-holding cypher with time-slowing powers – but Alma was the real star. An awesome



**Info**

**Format** PS3 **ETA**  
**Out now** **Pub** Warner  
**Dev** Monolith  
**Players** 1-16 **Web**  
[projectorigin.warnerbros.com](http://projectorigin.warnerbros.com) **It's like** Having a fight with hundreds of tonnes of beefsteak and a cloud of steam.

telepath signed over to a life of horrific experimentation and psychic breeding, it was her tortured mental echoes that gave you the hallucinations that made FEAR such a memorable game. It certainly wasn't the levels that set the game apart – the staff of developer Monolith cheerfully admit that the first game's preoccupation with office space was a reflection of how much they hated their own working environment at the time. It was the storyline, and the haunting figure of Alma that dragged people screaming through the first FEAR experience.

The sequel starts just before the nuclear blast finale of the first game (the two PC expansion packs are excised from history) with you as part of a squad sent in to save Armacham's president, Genevieve Aristide, from the unfolding disaster. It doesn't go so well – atomic megablasts have a tendency to disrupt missions – and you soon find yourself shooting your way through Armacham's

freshly-activated Replica soldiers and a gruesome variety of ghost and mutants, all victims of the company's amoral experiments. What's more there are odd things happening to the new guy's brain – not only do you develop the time-slowing powers 'enjoyed' by Point Man in the first game, but you're plagued with visions of an Alma who's older, nuder, and a lot more physical that she used to be.

### Mech love to me

There's a decent variety to the levels this time around, with hospital, school, and still-burning streets providing a deeper insight into how a town designed to breed ultra-mentalists works. That's not to say there's any hint of exploration – this is as linear as it gets – but there is a bit more for your character to do, like manning turrets and getting to ride mech suits. Clearly there's none of the original game's skin-crawling scares during these bits, but they're over-powered,

### What you do in... FEAR 2





❑ "You've got something on your uniform." The side of war not shown in army recruitment ads.



❑ Shooting a laser at an enemy will make him come apart like Action Man in the microwave.



❑ Melee attacks in bullet time feel a lot like that dream where you're naked, running in slo-mo.

engagingly dumb relief from the otherwise oppressive feeling of being hunted, physically and mentally.

There's also a sense of humour in evidence, and a willingness to play with gamers' expectations. Your captain's reaction to the mysterious 'Deep Throat' character who joins in your radio conversations is priceless – especially when he decides to call himself Snake Fist. And the story, the thing that lifted the first game out of 'perfectly acceptable shooter' and into something that people could love, is still great. With some cleverly revealed twists, some subtle touches that you can easily miss, and an excellent script that makes your entire squad seem properly likeable and human, it's a pleasure to play through.

Innovation, however, is not FEAR 2's strong suit. Collecting key cards, shooting padlocks off gates – it's defiantly retro, and there's not much to do but kill stuff. The only non-combat collectibles are adrenaline boosters that allow you to slow time for slightly longer, and blue items that contain more information about the town that Armacham built. It's genuinely worth picking these up – especially in the elementary school level

### Influences Probing the dark places behind FEAR 2's scares and shooting



The Ring



Aliens



Shogo



A Better Tomorrow



Doom



❑ Going outside is a blessed relief after all the dark corridors.

## "The ending is so *wrong* you'll want to scrub your brain clean."

– as they add a little extra depth to the game's strongest aspect, the storyline.

### Stop... bullet time

Luckily, the combat is impressively solid, with a range of guns and just enough of an ammo deficit to force you into trying them all out. Shotguns are invaluable against the wall-flipping aberrations, but for armed enemies you won't get close enough to feel the benefit, unless you slow time, zip in, and pop one off in the face. It's a strictly 1990s cover system – no fancy locking to surfaces, just crouching behind sofas and strafing behind pillars. That said, you *can* flip tables over and create your own cover now – something only the brainless meat soldiers could do in the first game. It's nice to finally reach their level.

There's a good range of weapons, as you'd hope in a town run by an experimental arms manufacturer, but there are a few disappointments.

The excellent Penetrator from the first game, for example, has been renamed the Hammerhead, and no longer pins twitching enemies to walls quite as easily. You get more ammo for it, but it's not a trade we'd have made given the choice. Also, the laser that kills you so easily is feeble in your hands. And while it does occasionally cause people's heads to fly off, the disparity is frustrating.

FEAR 2 is a definite improvement on the first game. However, time has moved on in ways that Project Origin has failed to respond to adequately. It remains streets ahead of most of its competitors in terms of storyline, scripting and clever, drip-fed exposition, but it's jarringly old-skool in terms of gameplay. That said it's still a very good shooter and,

notwithstanding an ending so *wrong* it will make you want to scrub your brain clean for a week, FEAR 2 comes recommended to anyone who likes their shooters with a side order of scares. **Jon Blyth**



Moving target

# Super Stardust Portable

The galaxy's in peril and only... Oh, you know the drill

**N**ever played Super Stardust HD? You're missing out. Despite being over a year old it's still one of PSN's best buys, meshing fast, twitchy gameplay with sparkling visuals while exploiting gamers' unquenchable must-beat-my-mates competitiveness. This near-identical PSP version of the top-down shooter is nearly as good...

You play as a spaceship tasked with protecting five different planets from asteroids and aliens. You get a supply of smart bombs and invulnerability boosts to help, but the real fun is improving your three types of weapon by snaring power-ups, switching between them to destroy the different types of asteroid. Rock crusher on chunks of ice? Tame. Gold melter on, um, gold? Mmmm, liquidy.

Where this version loses out to its bigger bro is that the zoomed-in perspective feels claustrophobic by comparison



### Info

Format PSP (PSN download) **ETA** Out now **Pub** Sony **Dev** Housemarque  
**Players** 1 **Web** [snipurl.com/a665l](http://snipurl.com/a665l)  
**It's like** A glittering fireworks display in the deepest reaches of space.



▲ Altogether now: "I fell into a burning ring of fire, I went down down down..."

and – crucially – lacks SSHD's right analogue stick shooting. The four face buttons are used instead – **▲** to fire up, **Ⓑ** to fire left, etc – meaning you can only shoot in eight directions. Even with the ability to spray your weapon in a circle by holding down all four, it's a bit fiddly. Not a gamebreaker, but will cost you the odd life – which, in a shooter that's all about racking up a high score (and comparing yours against mates and randoms



online) – *always* leads to swears. The bad swears. But if the mechanic itself wasn't so naggingly addictive, you wouldn't care in the first place. **Ben Wilson**

Chopin trip

# Eternal Sonata

"Okay, who greenlit the game set in the dying composer's head?"

✔ We'd kill a real, live man to have hair like that for just one day.



✔ If you can't tell from this shot, which looks like a pile of action figures on fire, the fighting is really innovative.





### Info

Format PS3 **ETA** Out now **Pub** Atari **Dev** Tri-Crescendo **Players** 1 **Web** [eternalsonata.namcobandagames.com](http://eternalsonata.namcobandagames.com) **It's like** Final Fantasy meets The Sound Of Music.

**A**s videogames go, this belongs in the 'eh?' pile. You live inside Polish composer Frédéric Chopin's dreams as he drifts in and out of consciousness in the hours leading up to his death from tuberculosis. You are Polka, a young, terminally-ill girl who teams up with other musically-named children to fight the evil Count Waltz. And for a game so properly, wildly absurd, the results are unexpectedly delightful, brimming with wonder and romance.

It helps that it's beautiful, presenting rural locations in lush vibrant colours. Sadly, the game's fixed camera funnels you down linear paths so there's not much room to admire the view. Still, the cel-shaded (don't leave!) graphics and classical soundtrack, which uses Chopin's tunes, create an engaging and original world for you to explore.

There are the usual RPG time-fillers – levelling-up,

exploring, having big eyes – but the game's primary innovation lies in its battle system. At the start of each character's turn you run about freely firing off as many attacks and spells as you can before a timer runs out. Every time you make an attack, the timer depletes, so much of the strategy comes from carefully planning moves within the shrinking window of opportunity.

Better yet, the game's been beefed up since its release on 360 last year. Two bonus dungeons are unlocked on completion, and the boy/girl paring of Serenade and Crescendo are now playable characters. And the story's been overhauled, with an improved translation



plus some extra sequences from Chopin himself helping to explain what his dreamworld is about. Which is not unlike our real-world dreams: strange but somehow comforting. **Simon Parkin**

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**review** PS3  
Street Fighter IV







Guile's flash kick is still one of the cheapest moves in the game. Hooray.

## Karate kids

# Street Fighter IV

Old challenger returns from the wilderness to crush rivals

**Y**ou probably feel one of two ways about Street Fighter IV. If you're above the age of 20 or ever owned a SNES, it's like your best mate – the one who took you to all the best parties and hooked you up with your best ever girlfriend and once nearly killed you in a freak space-hopper accident but you laughed about it later – is finally coming back to the country after ten years in Australia. You're excited, but at the same time nervous. What if he isn't funny anymore? Alternatively, if you didn't play the original – and we're talking the obsession-forming, era-defining World Warrior here, not any of the semi-sequels with the rubbish new characters and confusing strategies – then it's like everyone else is talking about having exactly the same mate and you can't believe how he could be so amazing.

Nobody panic. Street Fighter is back with a sweet new haircut and hugs for everyone. Producer Yoshinori Ono clearly

loves a) Street Fighter b) Street Fighter fans and c) Everyone else, and through that love he's produced a game that's like Street Fighter II remembered through the rosier-tinted spectacles in history, then made extra brilliant with the power of the 21st century.

### Players' champion

Case in point: until about a year ago, the collision detection was worked out by where the 3D characters' limbs were. It

**“It's SFII made brilliant with the power of the 21st century.”**

made sense on paper, but it felt subtly wrong if you'd played the original, so Ono-san took his playtesters' criticism on the chin and retooled the entire game to mimic the chunky rectangular hit boxes of SFII. Some glaring imbalances have been ironed out, but most of the combos are exactly the same as they were 15 years ago – so if you remember Ken's jumping fierce kick, standing uppercut,



**Info**  
Format PS3 ETA 20 Feb Pub  
Capcom Dev Capcom Players 1-2  
Web streetfighter.com It's like A  
childhood friend dressed in CGI magic.

flaming Dragon Punch combo you'll still be able to fire it out. If you haven't played since your local arcade closed down, it's like channelling amnesiac fight-machine Jason Bourne through your thumbs – special moves, counters and combos

come out almost unprompted as your muscle memory takes over.

Sensibly, though, Capcom has been realistic about which games in the series the general public actually like – the tricky Alpha counters, parries and air blocks from SFII's spin-offs have been ignored as potentially too confusing. The super attacks are still there, but critically, they aren't all that difficult to do – two ▶▶



▲ Load times can be lengthy, but if you install the game they disappear.

PS3  
098

quarter-circles on the pad isn't a move that should take more than 20 minutes to master. Super-damaging Ultra moves are done the same way – though you'll need to map the 'All three punches' command to one of the shoulder buttons to do them easily. Finally, doing a special move while pressing two buttons at a time makes the attack hit harder, go faster, or hit more often in exchange for a chunk of Special gauge – a simple thing to do that almost doubles your tactical options. It's like chess: it's not difficult to play because it's tricky to remember which direction the horse ones go, it's tough because a lot of simple moves can be combined in thousands of different ways. Tekken and Virtua Fighter's



**ScorePole**  
Virtua Fighter and Soulcalibur are hard men, but SFIV is the daddy.

algebraic lists of moves might put you off, but Street Fighter just wants to give you a sexy cuddle.

### Dragon bunch

Then there's the character selection. Capcom has been sensible here, too – they've simply slapped in the original 12, the ones everyone remembers, and built the rest of the roster around that. Every one of them's beautifully realised – Zangief bulges out of all proportion, Honda's chunky without being comically fat, Chun Li's thighs are like boughs of sturdy English oak and Ken's still punchably smug. Animations get a next-gen polish, but it's never intrusive –



**2up**  
second opinion

**Name** Tim Clark  
**Angle** Cheap Vega player

"We've lost entire days arguing over the score for this, and teetered on the edge of giving it 10/10. Personally, the new characters leave me absolutely cold, but if you're willing to really master the nuances of Street Fighter IV then there's no other fighting game that can match the oceanic depth and sheer fun found here. It isn't quite universal enough to get a perfect score, but for the purists it doesn't get any better."

**Best for...**  
Proving how hardcore you are

## The five most essential moves



### SPECIALS

The button you press to trigger a Special affects its outcome. Viper charges in different directions depending on which punch button you use for her electric attack.



### EX

Press two buttons to perform a Special and it changes. Ryu's fireball sets enemies on fire, for example, while Ken's Hurricane kick twirls faster.



### FOCUS

The only completely 'new' move. Press medium punch and kick together, and unleash an attack that can absorb one of your opponent's strikes on the way in.



### SUPER COMBOS

Build up your Super Bar and you can unleash an enhanced version of one of your Specials. Landing them is hard, but the damage is immense.



### ULTRA COMBOS

Take a pounding, and your Revenge Gauge builds up. Once it's big enough, you can fire off the Ultra Combo – an even more damaging attack than the Super.



▲ Blanka's rejoined the tournament as he feels like a burden to his newly found mum. Sniff.

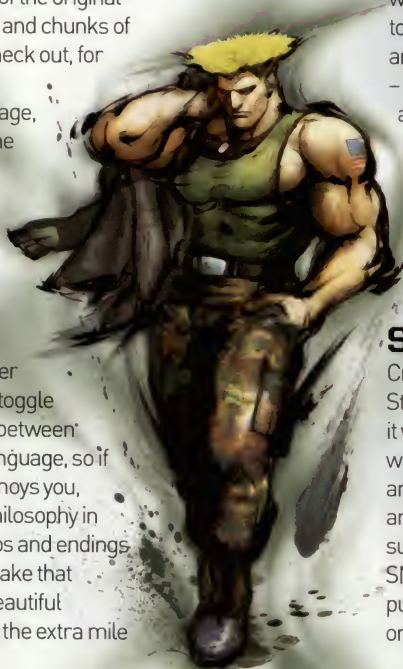


▲ Some of the characters actually talk to each other during their 'destined' battles. 'I caht breev!'

Guile's flash kick leaves a shimmering trail and camera angles shift occasionally to emphasise an ultra move, but not at the expense of the gameplay. Despite initial misgivings, the new characters blend in nicely, and actually provide new styles of play – C Viper's a nod to the high-jumping characters of SNK games, El Fuerte plays a bit like Virtua Fighter luchador El Blaze, Abel's a surprisingly agile counter-fighter and quick-for-a-fat-lad Rufus is spiritually closest to SFIII's diminutive Yang. Then there's the final one-two punch – *eight* classic characters from other games in the series, voted on by fans (bam!), *plus* Ryu's always-rumoured, never-seen-in-a-game-before sensei Gouken (wham!). Oh, and playable megaboss Seth. But he's crap.

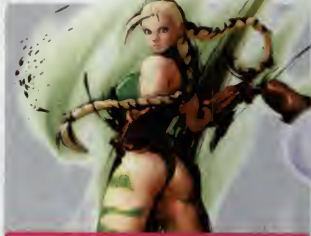
### Fan-tastic

And then there's everything else. Street Fighter IV keeps the spirit of the original while adding a PS3 sheen and chunks of thoughtful fan-service. Check out, for instance, the laughing schoolkids in the Japan stage, the whooping crowds at the drive-in or the drunken businessmen (one of them falls off the stage after big moves) in the indoor arena – they're perfect replacements for Guile's airforce base and Ken's yacht. Or have a tinker with the menus – you can toggle every character's speech between English and their native language, so if Ryu's American twang annoys you, you can hear him growl philosophy in Japanese. The anime intros and endings are the perfect icing on a cake that doesn't really need it – a beautiful example of Capcom going the extra mile



## Lady killers

For your consideration: three console-exclusive lovelies



### CAMMY

After moonlighting as half of the Killer Bee unit with the evil Shadowloo for all the Alpha games and recovering her memory in The New Challengers, Cammy's back with the plum-voiced Delta Red task force.

<b>Hair</b>	Blonde
<b>Marital status</b>	Can't remember
<b>Age</b>	19
<b>Occupation</b>	Amnesiac assassin
<b>Likes</b>	Cats (inevitably)
<b>Dislikes</b>	M Bison, Trivial Pursuit



### ROSE

Also a character in novelty horror beat-'em-up Darkstalkers, Rose has evolved into one of the series' mainstays. Odd, because she doesn't fit the tone at all, fighting with her semi-sentient scarf. Honestly.

<b>Hair</b>	Brown
<b>Marital status</b>	Bound to evil dictator
<b>Age</b>	19
<b>Occupation</b>	Fortune teller
<b>Likes</b>	Soul Power, Tarot cards
<b>Dislikes</b>	Psycho Power, Poker



### SAKURA

Only in a Japanese game can a besotted schoolgirl pursuing a grown man be presented as cute and adorable – but that's what Sakura's been doing to Ryu for about five games now.

<b>Hair</b>	Brown
<b>Marital status</b>	Legal: Just
<b>Age</b>	16
<b>Occupation</b>	Schoolgirl, Ryu's protégé
<b>Likes</b>	Cherry blossom, Ryu
<b>Dislikes</b>	Maths, detention

▶ Honda's hundred hand slap is the refuge of the weak and the lame.



when they could have cobbled something together using the game engine without anyone noticing. Even the loser's bellows – Rufus squeaks 'Oh crap!', Balrog yelps a genuinely heartbroken 'My prize moneeeeeey!' – fit the spirit of the characters, of the game, in general. There's a feeling throughout that Capcom has done everything it can possibly think of, and it's impossible not to respect them for it.

### Sticking point

Criticisms? Just one. You can't really play Street Fighter IV properly – the way it was designed to be played – without investing in one, and preferably two, quality arcade sticks. It wasn't such a problem in the SNES version because pushing all three buttons at once wasn't such an issue,

but here you'll struggle to map everything – Focus moves, Ultras, medium punch and kick – to the shoulder buttons in a way that makes playing with every character practical. And Guile's double-flash kick isn't much fun. But, really, that's a criticism on a par with saying that you need a plastic guitar to play Rock Band – it isn't something that should put you off, just something you need to factor into the cost of the game. Because however you feel about SFIV, it deserves to be played. It builds on the original without losing sight of what made it so great, tinkers with the playing system without over complicating it, and adds to what's already there in exactly the right places. It's taken nearly two decades, but SFIV finally has a sequel that does it proud. **Joel Snape**





Windy thriller

# Flower

Warning: contains florid language

Here's how the developers describe Flower: "Our videogame version of a poem, exploiting the tension between urban bustle and natural serenity. Players enter various flower's dreams to transform the world." Which is a load of self-important nonsense, obviously. And yet... wow. Just... wow. What a liberating, uplifting experience. What a remarkable achievement. What an amazing game.

## Dark clouds

It is a game in which you are a flower, drifting on the breeze. Yes! A flower! On the breeze! And yet it works – it really, really works. You don't even have to put aside your cynicism at this piece of art school pretentiousness masquerading as a game, because Flower does it for you. In fact, maybe the way the game's self-satisfied optimism and good cheer make you want to hate it is a crucial part of what makes it such an incredible experience – the way that you find those dark thoughts and that initial scepticism

## Like this? Play these



**LocoRoco 2**  
Bouncy puzzler which is more about mood – a grinning, dancing mood – than gameplay.  
**VERDICT 8**



**Rez**  
The original pretentious arty game, but with a great deal more shooting.  
**VERDICT 8**

gently clearing away and dissolving into joy before you realise it.

The obvious frame of reference is Flow, but this is an altogether happier and more exhilarating affair. Like in Flow, you twist and turn the Sixaxis to control the game, in this case steering your flower on the wind, soaring and swooping, falling and rising. It's also a bit like Rez, in the way that your actions transform both the world around you, opening flowers which burst in to bright blooms, and the sounds in it. And what sounds they are, with a wistful, longing feel, full of constantly shifting moods and set against a backdrop of swooshing winds, or distant birdsong as you catch the breeze.

## Floral tribute

Any more than that, though, would be to reveal too much about the game, because much of its brilliance is in the journey of discovery that it encourages you to make – a

## Info

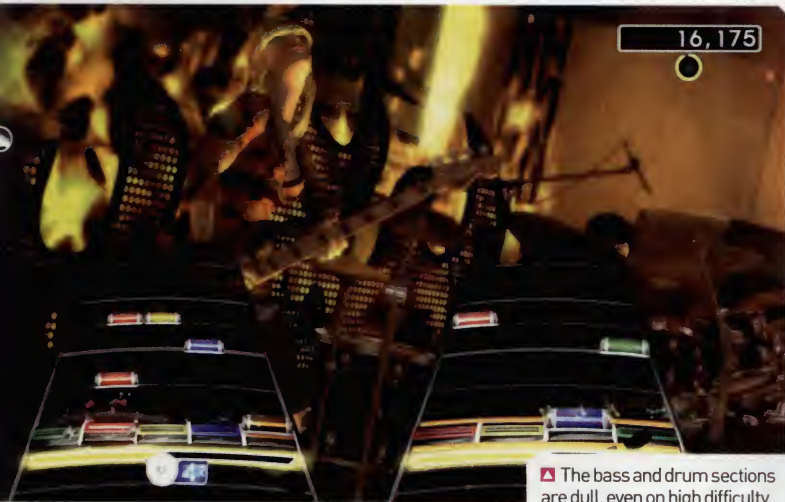
**Format** PSN download **ETA** Out now  
**Pub** Sony **Dev** thatgamecompany  
**Players** 1 **Web** [enjurl.com/evdzg](http://enjurl.com/evdzg)  
**It's like** Astral projecting yourself into a Wordsworth poem.

journey that can proceed at whatever pace you like, fast or slow. There is one level that doesn't work as well as the others – perhaps not coincidentally, it's when things start to get a bit dark and moody – but it's the game's only misstep. The only other potential criticism is that, by videogame standards, Flower is short: you can reach the credits in little more than an hour, with not much more than that required to unlock all of its nooks and crannies. But forget about the length, just enjoy the intensity: like all great art it leaves you wanting more; leaves you with the feeling that somehow you've connected with the universe. That's right, I said art.

It's like going to a weekend supplement-sponsored music festival for the beer and discovering that all of a sudden you're enjoying the music. It's surprising and brilliant and you should play it.

**David McCarthy**





▲ The bass and drum sections are dull, even on high difficulty.

Scrap metal

# AC/DC Live Rock Band

For those about to rock... we pity you

**D**id you know that AC/DC have a song called Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap? Us neither. But it's included here along with 17 other tracks, many of which you've likely never heard of, and it sums up this miserable cash-in perfectly – a poorly conceived and clumsily executed waste of time and money.

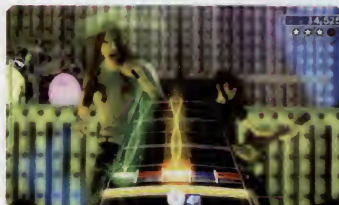
The drill is familiar by now: a descending notetrack syncs to a song, while you strum, drum or sing along, strong liquor and female company a bonus. AC/DC Live is a retail release, but it's little more than a bare-bones trackpack riddled with problems. You can't download tracks, there's no real 'tour' mode, there's no character creation, and you can't play online. There's no attempt at creating the feel of an AC/DC show: no band members or pyrotechnics. The sound quality is good for a live recording, but AC/DC are one of those bands for whom 'live recording' often means 'people pay to see us noodle', so there are unbearable songs that badly need their masturbatory four-to-five-minute solo 'workouts' removed.

## Riff off

The tracks here are taken from AC/DC's Live At Donington, an album that's been around for 18

### Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now  
Publisher MTV Developer Harmonix  
Players: 1-4 Web rockband.com  
It's like Being mugged with a Fender.



▲ The absence of AC/DC as performers is truly baffling. It's like being in a covers band.

years. Devoted AC/DC fans will invariably already own it, begging the question why not put out a studio 'best of' that might draw in the more casual listener.

Given that the game clocks in at 30 Earth pounds, it means you'll be paying somewhere in the region of £1.65 for each track, whereas an equivalent Rock Band track will set you back about £1.10. It wasn't that long ago that Harmonix was making jokes about the original Rock Band's extortionate UK pricing:

"You're not being gouged!" And if you're dumb enough to buy this, then you're dumb enough to believe that too.

**Rich Stanton**



# Japan Watch

This month's overseas action in a nutshell

## Zill O'll Infinite Plus

Format PSP Pub Koei Subtitles No

Has the global credit crunch finally closed its molars around Japanese development with this, the second remake of a Koei RPG that's already graced PS1 and PS2? To be fair, I shouldn't be getting all sniffy – I've been happily playing essentially the same Metal Gear game on PS1, PS2 and PS3.



## Brandish The Dark Revenant

Format PSP Pub Falcom Subtitles No

Further proof that, as the dwindling supply of Super Famicoms dries up, PSP will become Japan's number one repository of creaky RPGs. This action role-player keeps things old-skool and stabby, with heroes Ares and Dela navigating untold miles of aggro-filled dungeons.



## Sugo! Arcana Heart 2

Format PS2 Pub AQ Interactive Subtitles No

Girl on girl fighting means different things to different people. In the UK it's the tawdry, car park finale to a night on the blue vodka pops. In this Arcana Heart sequel it's a voyeuristic, fireworks-driven spectacle where sailor-suited Amazons perform aerial combat that would give an F16 pilot vertigo. Stay classy, Tokyo.



## Exotic Boxart Of The Month



### Shinkyoku Soukai Polyphonica: The Black

In the current economic climate it seems unwise to caption this on the grounds it will likely cost me my job.



### Kamen no Maid Guy: Boyoyon Battle Royale

Not 'Made Man' or 'Wise Guy', but a male, dressed as a French maid fighting a similarly dressed demon.



### Super Robot Taisen Z Special Disc

Less of a striking mech montage than a clumsy mess of clanking warbot components. Unless this is a single machine in which case it's the best robot ever.

Pixie puncher

# Battle Fantasia


Because playing Street Fighter IV is, like, so *obvious*

**W**ith half a dozen quality beat-'em-ups on PS3, including the mighty Street Fighter IV, there are two ways to stand out: either be better than all of them, or dig yourself a niche as deep as the Marianas Trench. Guess which option

this, a fantasy game about boys setting dragons on sexy cat-girls, goes for?

### Role-punching game

There's a decent fighting system underneath all the pencil-sketches and pixie dust. The game's got the trappings of an RPG – characters lose 'hit points' if they take a whack, and everyone has ridiculous jobs and equipment (the Pocketwatch Of Oblivion is a favourite) – but the actual combat is comfortably retrograde. Developer Arc Systems also makes the Guilty Gear series, so the system will be familiar to anyone who's played that. Even though the characters are 3D, the fighting itself happens in a 2D plane, with three special moves and a super attack for each character. Plenty of the moves are ridiculous – another Guilty Gear tradition – but don't really look spectacular. The game also chucks in a couple of innovations, like a parry

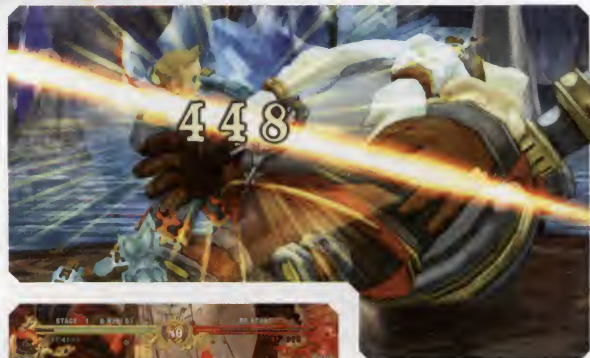


**Info**  
 Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub 505  
 Games Dev Arc Systems Players  
 1-2 Web aksygames.com/  
 battlefantasia **It's like** Playing a  
 so-so Street Fighter in fancy dress.

system similar to the now-abandoned one from Street Fighter III, and an inventive bounce-them-off-the-walls juggle mechanic.

The characters are the usual blend of speedy children and giant oafs, although there's a twist to the balance – some have much more health than others, so the game feels hopelessly unfair as you work out who needs to make up for weediness with superior moves.

If you want a cutesy, sepia-tinged fighting game where people throw teacups at each other, this is your only man. Meanwhile, the sane among you will doubtless stick with Ryu and chums. **Joel Snape**



▲ That's a fat man being knocked backwards – in case it wasn't immediately clear. Frankly, little here is.



## Game 4-a-date *Find new love*



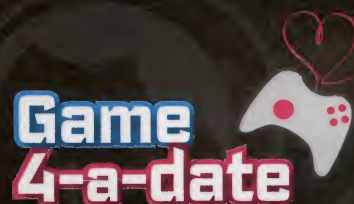
*Feeling Game 4 A Date?* Are you looking for a dating site that can connect you with people just as passionate about games as you in your area? Online dating doesn't need to be such a hassle; we've gone and made it all really, really easy. **Game 4 A Date** is a dating site designed just for you, helping you to find that someone special who shares a zeal for games.

Just log on to [www.game4adate.com](http://www.game4adate.com) and follow the simple registration process, fill in your profile and perfect partner preferences and then hey presto: you can now start looking for love. As a special introductory offer you can now **join for just £1\***, just enter the offer code **GAME1** when prompted.

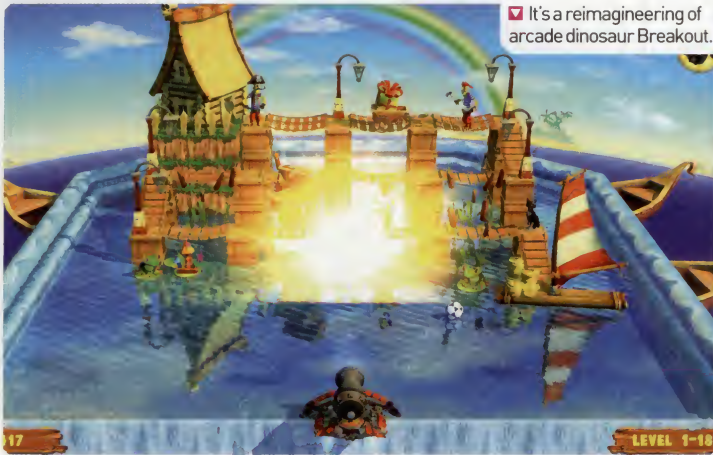
**Game 4 A Date** is fun, it's easy and more importantly, it's about putting you in touch with people who share that same genuine passion as you do for all things videogames. So go on, then, are you *Game 4 A Date?*



visit: [www.game4adate.com](http://www.game4adate.com)



\* Normal monthly subscription rate is £9.99. You may cancel your membership at any time.



It's a reimagining of arcade dinosaur Breakout.

Sphere effect

# Magic Ball

All in all it's just another brick in the wall

Reworking a classic game is, like covering a classic song, fraught with potential for mess-ups. Step forward Magic Ball, a reworking of Breakout and Arkanoid that twists their brick-breaking formula by introducing a Pinball-style perspective and bigger, tougher targets, all set within a jolly pirates-and-knights-themed world.

So, you control a raft that moves along each level's rim, bouncing a football into various objects. Once they're all destroyed, you scoop up a 'V' (for victory, presumably) token and head on to the next stage. Simple stuff, then, but Magic Ball's use of perspective goes some way towards distinguishing it from the legions of other Breakout clones, and the 3D models you're bashing disintegrate pleasingly enough.

## Power balls

Depth of field aside, Magic Ball's hook is its power-ups, released when objects are destroyed, and the amped-up destruction they trigger. When you're ping-pong spiking balls around or mopping up the shattered remains of the stage with a laser, this temporarily feels like the best brick-breaker ever. Unfortunately, that kind of manic pace is rare. Too often you'll be idly bumping a football back and forth, desperately trying to knock a power-up free or threading the ball through channels while trying to

### Info

Format PSN ETA Out now  
Pub Sony Dev Creat Studios  
Players 1-2 Web [snipurl.com/al9hi](http://snipurl.com/al9hi)  
It's Like A restored pinball table with its charm hidden by gaudy new paint.



3D lifts the action for a while, but this is no more than a few hours' distraction.



Use the ball to knock power-ups free and the action gets a welcome shot of speed.

decide what you're going to play next.

And that's the main problem with Magic Ball. It loses whatever grip it has on your attention too quickly. The majority of the game's 48 levels can be cleared on a first attempt, and the half-baked multiplayer

mode (both online and off) can't prevent it from drifting into gentle obscurity. Yes, it'll kill an hour or two – but that's hardly a reason to break out the good china, is it? **Rich Stanton**



# Straight to bargain bin

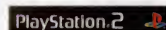
With Nathan Ditum



Here's a free bit of advice for all the publishers out there: if you're making a budget racing game full of invisible barriers, ice-skate handling and two-dimensional scenery, don't – DON'T – give it a title that puns on the word 'cheap'. Not even if it fits pleasingly with the manufacturer's licence you've shelled out for, as is the case with the intimidatingly ballbag **Jeep Thrills** (which, by the way, I'm presuming was *the last car licence left in the world*).

Aside from the general incompetence on display, disappointments include the fact that the canyon track's awful graphics make it look like you're waterskiing on a carpet of half-chewed Wotsits, and the lack of a suburban school run level in which you race Julian and Callum to the gates before their early morning euphonium lesson begins.

I really like the idea of **Monster Lab**, in which you use Frankenstein science to build customised robotic monsters and make them fight other monsters. But, like most things in my life that I allow myself to believe in even for a moment, it falls to dust as soon as you touch it. Not only does it move from standard 3D platforming to cutaway 2D combat whenever you meet an enemy, the actual fighting isn't even in real time – you take turns to choose an attack and then select which part of your enemy it'll hit. It feels a bit like picking up a really hot chick and getting back to her place, only for her to insist that the fooling around is directed with a Twister spinner. "Your left hand to... my right knee." Are you turned on yet?



Apart from Zac Efron's inexplicably underdeveloped and newtish face, there's no reason in principle that I should dislike **High School Musical 3 Senior Year Dance!** Hating the chirpy phenomenon would be admitting that I'm old, and my own sagging, ringed face already trumpets that to world at all times. No, I dislike HSM3SYD! because it's a wasted opportunity. The game consists of using either a dance mat or the D-pad to tap out a rhythm in time to the movements of flying green blobs, while a stiffly recreated polygon version of a bit from the films plays in the background. Why not just use actual footage, rather than copy it just to make it look worse? And, more pressingly, what's the difference between playing the game and simply watching the films while tapping your hand with a pencil?

# Abomination of the month



The art of distraction is key to successfully raising children, as I've learned through years of buying cheap, colourful toys every time the kids ask difficult questions ('Will Lucky ever wake up? Why is Mummy crying?') On that basis, **Shrek's Carnival Craze Party Games** should be amazing – it has 28 equally cheap and colourful party games, like frog tossing and sack racing, contested by characters from the increasingly dreadful films. But it's all ruined by cardboard animation, freakishly inaccurate voice acting (Shrek now sounds like a drunk Mahatma Gandhi) and the fact that even though four characters appear in every game, it only supports two real players. Hence, "Daddy, why did you snap our game in half?"



▣ If we hadn't already been smashed 4-0, the 'invincible season' talk would be here.



# OPM hands out beating

## Season hits a high with 5-0 victory

**T**here are times in sport when all you can do is stare and clap. (Think John Terry being sent off for another 'brave' lunge.) This month's FIFA 09 Online Challenge saw the goal dam finally burst. And while our opponents didn't clap – presumably they were stunned into silence – it didn't matter because we were too busy dancing and laughing and scoring.

It started on the 35 minute mark, when Liverpool101 – playing his regular position up top as Van Persie – slotted home from

the edge of the box. The scoring from this point on was free-flowing, with Lukescool007cool001 adding one from the spot with Adebayor, Liverpool101 completing his hat-trick, and our own OPM\_Ben putting the icing on the sadly only metaphorical goal cake with a 25-yard chipped finish over an on-rushing David James. We said we were playing Portsmouth, right? It still counts.

If your team could do better then head on over to [gamesradar.com/fifa09onlinechallenge](http://gamesradar.com/fifa09onlinechallenge) to register your details.



**Sign up to play our FIFA 09 side now**  
[gamesradar.com/fifa09onlinechallenge](http://gamesradar.com/fifa09onlinechallenge)





Corporal gunishment

# Söldner-X: Himmelsstürmer


So old-skool it would cane you if it had hands

Ignore the madness of the name and imagine this as an exotically renamed R-Type. That's basically what you're buying – a side-scrolling sci-fi arcade shooter that casts you as a lone fighter pilot facing incredible odds. The only difference is that instead of the famous crook-nosed R-Type ship you're saving humanity (yay!) by blasting your way through the increasingly frenetic and insanely bullet-ridden levels in the state-of-the-art Söldner-X fighter.

What Söldner-X may lack in originality it makes up for by being monumentally hard. Enemies comprise of swarms of mechanical and organic enemies, such as mutated insects and fat, screen-hogging bosses, while your five weapons (Pulse, Beam, Bow, Flame and Rockets) are restricted by energy bars and limited ammo, forcing you to add a bit of thought to your otherwise all-action approach.

## Easy does it

Rather than starting gently and easing you in, the difficulty curve kicks off like a midnight SWAT team drugs raid – and gets meaner from there. Mostly this is deliberate, with a greater number of enemies gradually introduced, but you'll also suffer from erratic respawns that can materialise you directly in



### Info

Format: PSN download  
 ETA: Out now  
 Pub: Sony Dev  
 Sidequest Studios  
 Players: 1-2  
 Website: soldner-x.com  
 It's like Flying an armoured needle through a haystack.

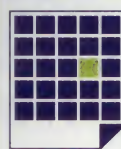


▲ "Passengers may have noticed a small fire in the left engine. No need for concern..."

front of an onrushing horde, and colour-clashing between foes and backdrops can make it hard to identify some enemies.

There are over 20 power-ups to help you overcome the odds, including health and weapon bonuses, while an automatic Berserker mode kicks in when your health drops below 20%, allowing you to dish out more damage and suffer less. But it's not enough to compensate for Söldner-X's larger problems of originality, imagination and longevity. After a few hours the only thing keeping you coming back will be a furious determination to beat the sodding game, rather than anything actually approaching enjoyment.

Martin Korda



## Release Schedule

Coming soon to a PlayStation near you

	Publisher	ETA	Format
50 Cent Blood On The Sand	THQ	20 Feb	PS3
<b>The Godfather II</b>	EA	20 Feb	PS3
Street Fighter IV	Capcom	20 Feb	PS3
<b>X-Blades</b>	SouthPeak	20 Feb	PS3
Killzone 2	Sony	27 Feb	PS3
Rise Of The Argonauts	Codemasters	27 Feb	PS3
Silent Hill Homecoming	Konami	27 Feb	PS3
Heroes Over Europe	Atari	6 Mar	PS3
<b>Afro Samurai</b>	Atari	13 Mar	PS3
Resident Evil 5	Capcom	13 Mar	PS3
Wheelman	Midway	20 Mar	PS3
Resistance Retribution	Sony	20 Mar	PSP
Rock Revolution	Konami	27 Mar	PS3
Stormrise	Sega	27 Mar	PS3
The Chronicles Of Riddick: ADDA	Atari	27 Mar	PS3
<b>Eat Lead: The Return Of Matt Hazard</b>	D3	Mar	PS3
Rag Doll Kung Fu	Sony	Mar	PSN
Tom Clancy's Hawx	Ubisoft	Mar	PS3
Watchmen	Warner Bros	Mar	PSN
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	THQ	Mar	PS3
Damnation	Codemasters	Apr	PS3
<b>UFC 2009 Undisputed</b>	THQ	19 May	PS3
Batman Arkham Asylum	Eidos	May	PS3
<b>Bionic Commando</b>	Capcom	May	PS3
Infamous	Sony	May	PS3
<b>Ghostbusters</b>	Atari	19 Jun	Multi
Fight Night Round 4	EA	Jun	PS3
<b>Fuel</b>	Codemasters	Jun	PS3
Operation Flashpoint 2: Dragon Rising	Codemasters	Jun	PS3
<b>Overlord 2</b>	Codemasters	Jun	PS3
Wanted Weapons Of Fate	Warner Bros	Jun	PS3
<b>Madden NFL 2010</b>	EA	Aug	Multi
Mini Ninjas	Eidos	Oct	PS3
<b>Bayonetta</b>	Sega	2009	PS3
Borderlands	Take Two	2009	PS3
DC Universe Online	SOE	2009	PS3
God Of War III	Sony	2009	PS3
<b>Gran Turismo 5</b>	Sony	2009	PS3
Mafia II	Take Two	2009	PS3
<b>MAG</b>	Sony	2009	PS3
Prototype	Activision	2009	PS3
<b>The Agency</b>	SOE	2009	PS3

! All release dates are accurate at time of press but liable to change.



READY MADE EXCUSE #28

## Pull a sickie for... Bionic Commando

“ Few days at least, yeah. Norovirus innit. Everything I put in comes straight out of both ends – you’ve seen one of those sprinklers right? ”

Vehicle levels are a highlight of LittleBigPlanet's online mode. Before you accelerate, though, make sure everyone is holding on for dear life.



Creative central

# LittleBigPlanet

Taking sackboy online. Child not included



## Info

**Format** PS3 **ETA**  
**Out Now** **Pub** Sony  
**Dev** Media Molecule  
**Players** 1-4 **Web**  
[littlebigplanet.com](http://littlebigplanet.com)  
**It's like** An adventure  
 in the most amazing  
 haberdashery shop in  
 the world.

Arran probably hates your LBP level. He's hated everything so far. This one-boy reviewing machine hates everything. Even those levels of astounding beauty, the ones where you can't quite believe the effort and ideas their creators have poured in. Arran doesn't care. He just wants gifts. LBP highlight? A hundred trophies in 30 seconds. Worst level? Piano. Arran is ten. And he's sitting next to me, guiding me through LBP's online modes.

LittleBigPlanet was built to be played, or at least shared, online. In Media Molecule's revolutionary platformer

you're given the tools to make your own levels, your own little vehicles, your own works of playable art. While the in-game tools are simple enough, experimentation reveals incredible depth. But be warned: creating anything worthwhile requires time and a certain amount of talent. Happily, the LBP community is huge. In a day of play I came across around 15 levels that easily match the quality of those supplied with the game – considering LBP has some of the best platform levels ever, that's pretty astonishing – and dozens more that are worth playing for the quality of their ideas. Arran likes three. They're titled 'free-gifts', 'free-trophies', and 'free stuff'.

where you simply hit a button to join a party of up to four players, are mostly stable, and mostly hilarious.

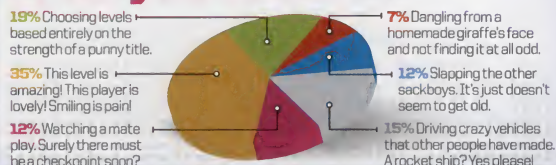
You'll gather in the host's cardboard pod while they pick a level, and then you're whisked away into someone else's imagination. The joy is in never knowing what's coming. And sharing the discovery together.

While there are times when a player's connection can't keep up with the action, leading to frustrating lag and repeated death, most of the time it's flawless. Players bound along the landscapes, jumping, popping when they land on flames or electrically charged platforms, and waving at their mates. Players develop an almost instinctual team-spirit – nobody really bothers with a Bluetooth headset for voice chat, and text entry is far, far too slow. So instead, players emotote. Need to go up? Then you wave your sackboy's arms for attention, and then point. Need

## Slapstick

What amazes me, though, is that even if he's constantly shooting other player's creations down, Arran is always having fun. LittleBigPlanet's online modes,

## What you do in... LBP





▣ LBP gives you a scary insight into other people's imagination. Long pink airliners? Gross.



▣ Some levels, like this one, are simply packed with cool objects and vehicles to try out.

someone to stand on a switch while you pull a lever? Then jump up and down on the switch until they get the point, then do your thing with the lever. It's simple. Even a ten-year-old could understand...

Oh. While trying to show Jace84 and KeeleysMom where to stand, Arran 'accidentally' slapped their sackboys in the face. Best not be too violent with those motions, eh?

### Leader of the pack

LBP isn't without problems. It can feel too unpredictable when you join for the first time. Parties of players rarely stay together for more than a few minutes – once one level is completed, the gang of sackboys tend to disband, which is a pity. I'd like to encourage you to stick together online. Worse than this, though, you'll often find yourself joining a level in progress. One-trick creations, like the many (and fun) vehicle dashes, don't have any restart points, so die and you'll be sat watching others have fun.

But this really is a special game, and it only begins to show its true colours online. Arran and I decided to play through the story levels together, joined by strangers online. The energy it created was infectious. We laughed as our new friends fell off into deep pits, cursed as they wasted our precious lives, but cheered when they completed parts of the level we couldn't pass. We even exchanged a spontaneous high-five or two.

The moments LBP creates are frequently unforgettable: the unprompted displays of kindness such as a sackboy, complete with preening lion's mane and day-glo shades, holding a door open for you, for example, or the shared thrill of a sackboy quartet holding on for dear life as one pulls a lever and the rocket they're all sat atop shoots into the heavens.

At the end of every level, Arran rated them. He never gave more than three stars. But his grin told a very different story. **Tim Edwards**



## Online round-up

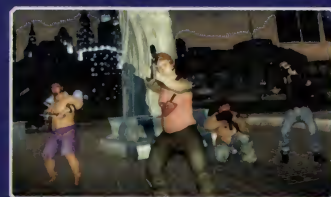
With Leon Hurley



Where did all the pretty go? The best bit about **Far Cry 2** was its dusty good looks – the light streaming through tall grass, and jungles rolling off into the distance. Online, however, it looks like a Playmobil activity set. I'm afraid to touch anything in case

the whole thing collapses like a cheap film set. Even the once terrifying infernos have been reduced to tiny little bush fires you needn't fear with a full bladder. I could forgive this if the action bit my hand off and used it to bitch-slap my disrespect. But it doesn't. There's zero feedback from shooting people: guns are fired and enemies sort of die but the connection between the two is less than clear, so it feels like miming to a video.

There's a big problem with **Resistance 2**'s co-op. Practically no one has a headset. It doesn't matter in straightforward multiplayer – you shoot people, they die, what's to talk about? But in co-op you've got eight different classes all trying to coordinate multiple objectives and take down massive bosses – something that would be a hell of a lot easier if teammates could communicate. "Cover me!" I yell as I dash out to flank a Chimera. "... they answer back and charge off in completely different directions. I did get *one* game with someone who had a mic but they were Spanish and I don't think me shouting "Shootos! Muerto los alienos" won me any friends.



Is **Saints Row 2** good online? I think it's good. It's hard to tell. The lobby takes so long I keep listening to my PS3 to check it's still working. Then, after an age, it starts without warning. Ta-da! The real problem is that you can't choose modes. You have to create

and host a game to do that and if I wanted to organise 12 violent teenagers I'd still be teaching music. Instead, Quick Play just fobs you off with whatever match type turns up next. Shame, as doing drive-bys in shopping malls or competing to pull off the biggest insurance fraud by jumping in front of cars is fun. So yes, it is good if you like slow lucky dips.

## Download of the month



I fell out with LittleBigPlanet after my PS3 crashed and wiped the hard drive. Christ it was heartbreaking to lose all that work. Anyway, I'm back now and I can't believe how good the player levels are getting. Especially with the new **Metal Gear Solid 4 Content Pack** (£4.79). As well as loads of stickers, objects and sound effects from the game you get the Paintinator, a paintball gun, and the Paintinator Switch which reacts to bullets. Being able to shoot stuff adds tons of potential. And it doesn't have to have a military theme, either. Check out "the human body great adventure! improved version" by ggmax. It's a beautifully made level in which you travel through a body using the Paintinator to blast away germs. Genius.

# mail@opm



From PlayStation hopes and fears to technical queries, this is the place to come for answers

Email us at [opm@futurenet.co.uk](mailto:opm@futurenet.co.uk) or write to Letters, OPM, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

If our years of experience have taught us anything – and they haven't – it's that the only substitute for the love of a good woman is the cold but reliable embrace of high-end electrical products. We can't help with the iambic pentameters, but a year's subscription to the magazine might ease your emotional torment.

### Facebook fans

I just wanted to thank you for creating the OPM Facebook group. It has allowed me to connect with other like-minded gamers who love Sony's box of dreams. You guys often drop in for a chat too! Direct public access! And posting on the group is a great way to get into your favourite mag. Most of the group were added to my PSN friends list months ago, and we've had so much fun discussing all things PlayStation. We've all played and hearted each other's LittleBigPlanet levels, and formed an MGO clan. Go Rocket Minions! We also meet up online to help each other get that elusive Trophy we need for Platinum. Some of us even met up for a day of gaming in London's Trocadero. One particular highlight was the dodggers. The group numbers are now up past the healthy 1,000 mark but I would like to encourage more of your readers to join up. It is the only place to go



Spidey disgracing himself in the last cash/tie-in.

Young lovers, Facebook group hugs, angry role-play, a real-life Guitar Hero and a LittleBigPlanet cake.

### Heartbreak hotel

You guys rock dearly, and do you want to know why? You cheer me up. I recently gave this girl I like at school a love poem, and I'm going through a lot of crap because of it. But when I get home to the great haven of PS3, that's when my day starts to lighten up. The magnificent magazine made by OPM and playing the awesome PS3 puts a smile on my face. Your reviews, jokes, mails, your whole magazine and the PS3 itself, all cheer me up, so thanks!

Alex Mason, by email

LBP and cake. What more do you need?



The OPM Facebook group. Get on board!



for all your PlayStation needs. Come on, get involved!

Johnboy Cole, by email

Barring the occasional flare-up (and some eyebrow-raising flirting) our benevolent online dictatorship is coming along nicely. The plan remains to cut the ribbon on a fully operational website in the coming months, so stay tuned for news on that

### Let them eat sack

Look what my perfect fiancée did for my 21st birthday. Bless her. The cake maker was Kayleigh Higginson.

Adam Bowman, by email

Tell us what's on your hard drive! Email us at [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com)

## What's on my hard drive



Nim Deonarain, London

### Music

A lot of Linkin Park, Pendulum, Metallica and Nickelback.

### Photo

All my school mates, random people from Call Of Duty: World At War and Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe.

### Video

A stack of different trailers and a lot of Bleach anime.

### Game

Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe, Mirror's Edge, Devil May Cry 4, Guitar Hero World Tour and more!

### Friends

I have all my best mates online! Plus some random people from Call Of Duty 4 and GTA IV matches.

Of all the sack-themed arts and crafts we've seen, that cake takes the biscuit. God we're so hungry.

### Movie tragic

"Right Jim, we have a good film here, it's all set to go but I can't help feeling that it's missing something." "Yes, you're right Sam. Wait! I have it, a rubbish movie game!" "Jim, you're a genius! One that has the added bonus of trampling over people's good feelings about the film and sucking the soul out of the videogame industry." "Yes!" This is how I imagine the sales pitch for movie tie-in games happens – it seems no serious thought

goes into them at all. I've lost count of the times I've ripped open the packaging of the tie-in for a film I've loved, and ended up sobbing through the night because Peter Parker looks like he's been made out of potatoes. Even worse are films that were bad but get a game to go with them anyway – The Golden Compass, really? And now I hear that a Watchmen game will be coming out to coincide with the movie! I want to hope for the best but I can't help feeling that Jim and Sam will ruin it all for me. I'll keep my money in my wallet until the much-awaited release of Lego: Requiem For A Dream.

**Robert Potter**, by email

Several points to make here. 1) Why do you persist in buying movie tie-ins despite our reviews consistently warning that they herald the End Days? 2) There's a chance Alien: Colonial Marines might be okay. 3) Lego: Requiem For A Dream would be amazing! Towards the end their little plastic arms would start falling off.

### School of rock

A few years ago, soon after my birthday, I read several reviews of Guitar Hero. Intrigued, I went to my local game shop, birthday money in hand, and bought it. I was sceptical at first – I had never played anything like it before. But I was instantly hooked. I played it for weeks until I'd mastered even the expert difficulty level. I enjoyed it so much, that I went out and bought myself a cheap electric guitar. I started playing around with it, taking free online tutorials. Then I saved up and bought a few lessons, and began improving, practising every day. I have kept that up and now I've done three local gigs with my new band, and I'm improving all the time. I look forward to doing more gigs in the future and travelling around the country to play.

**James Bedford**, by email

It was much the same with the original Metal Gear Solid. Leon heard good things about it from Japan, picked up an import copy, and now he's a senior M16 asset known only to the Russian spooks as 'The Kittyhawk'. Oops.

### Exterminate, exterminate

I was playing PS3 when it occurred to me: why not have games or even an entirely new genre where you're the enemy? Perhaps some sort of Resistance spin-off where you're the Chimera and you kill humans... or a Resi-type game where you're a

Being a virtual musician could lead to real-life gigs.

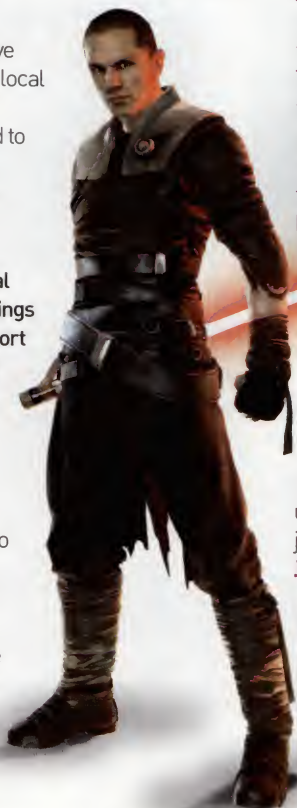


### Ask SONY

**Q** What is BD-Live?

**A** BD-Live is a Blu-ray feature that lets you access content via your PS3's internet connection. BD-Live can allow you to download up-to-date content and also enables exciting possibilities such as peer-to-peer interactions.

“Trust me, I'm a psychotic Jedi knight.”



zombie! Fight the humans as you gradually take over the planet. It'd be the first game where humans are completely wiped out by the enemy! Just a thought, it probably won't happen but it's a nice idea!  
**Declan Baseley**, by email

Much as we don't want to open this can of worms again (we've only just shooed all the worms back in), you can actually play as the zombies in Left 4 Dead. Sadly, it's only on Xbox 360 and personal computer. Because Valve hates us. That burning smell? Our copy of The Orange Box.

### Doctor Darth

After an intensive weekend spent exploring the Capital Wasteland in Fallout 3 my girlfriend demanded I turn off my PS3 and help her dye her hair (I know, deduct five man points) or face the harsh reality of my own local wasteland. As I began the tedious job of pulling the hair through the holes in the hat, she turned on the TV and Smallville was on. To my amazement there was Starkiller from Star Wars: The Force Unleashed masquerading as a paramedic called 'Davis'. Then I got to thinking... forget all the extreme training, all Jedi should become medics. Think about it! There's been a crash and someone is trapped under a truck. Our Jedi paramedic could simply lift the truck to one side with Force Lift and rip the door off using Force Pull. After helping the victims to safety they could use Force Lightning to revive a few people on-scene if the mobile defibrillator packs up. All proving the point that Starkiller is the ultimate paramedic... either that or he is just the guy they modelled Starkiller on.  
**Jamie Beattie**, by email

See if this sounds familiar: you saw the actor LucasArts used for Starkiller on TV, got a bit muddled by the hair dye fumes, and then started typing.

## Off the Wall



Choice cuts from the OPM Facebook group



### Raider Cheat

“Lara, Ms Croft, maybe you should sit down, I have something to tell you... I've been cheating on you for years with tall, ginger Nariko, half-demon Dante and a Persian prince.”

**Jen Stunt**



### Allergic to silver

“I don't care about Trophies. It is just a big willy-waving contest.”

**Kevin Nolan**



### Broken dreams

“Monty Python's Meaning Of Life (Crimson Permanent Assurance sketch) made my father want to be an accountant but it didn't happen for him either.”

**Christopher Larsson**



### Goonies game

“You thinking a truffle shuffle mini-game?”

**Nick Leighton**



### Home girl

“I happen to be female and as such chose a female avatar – it's like throwing hungry dogs a bone.”

**Louise Lalonde**



### World At War

“Admittedly it would be a lot more fun shooting a hoard of Dale Wintons than Nazi zombies. And instead of eerily glowing eyes, it would be the skin!”

**Christopher McDonald**

Send your questions to:  
[opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com)



# PS3 Essential collection

Build the ultimate PS3 library with our no-filler guide to the best next-gen games so far



1

Platformer

### LittleBigPlanet

Unleash your inner Miyamoto by creating and sharing your own levels online using the brilliantly simple but canyon-deep editing tools in Sony's phenomenal platformer. Absolutely essential.

10 Pub Sony  
Dev Media Molecule



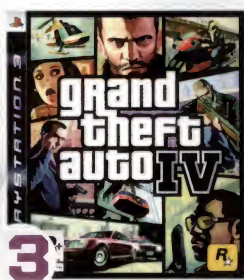
2

Shooter

### Call Of Duty 4 Modern Warfare

The SAS and US Marines invite you to fight the war on terror as Call Of Duty dumps WW2 for a modern-day setting. A beautiful, brutal and near flawless shooter.

10 Pub Activision  
Dev Infinity Ward



3

Action

### Grand Theft Auto IV

It's everything you love about GTA – the twisted characters, epic missions and savage humour – polished to perfection. A true modern masterpiece.

10 Pub Rockstar Games  
Dev Rockstar North



4

Stealth

### Metal Gear Solid 4 Guns Of The Patriots

A typically esoteric but masterful end to Snake's saga, blending beautifully immersive action with a lifetime's worth of cut-scenes. Divisive but essential.

10 Pub Konami  
Dev Konami Productions



5

Platformer

### Bioshock

Epic first-person adventure set in a ruined underwater city that combines brilliant genetic weapons with beautiful design, tons of atmosphere, and a genuinely affecting story.

10 Pub 2K Games  
Dev 2K Marin



6

Action-Adventure

### Uncharted Drake's Fortune

Treasure hunter Nathan Drake is after the fabled gold of El Dorado in this superb blend of action and physical puzzling. Think Gears Of War meets Tomb Raider.

9 Pub Sony  
Dev Naughty Dog



7

Shooter

### Killzone 2

Looks to die for, and endless waves of orange-eyed space Nazis aiming to ensure that's exactly what happens. Guerrilla's super-shooter is gritty, fierce and an utterly essential buy.

9 Pub Sony  
Dev Guerrilla



8

Shooter

### Resistance 2

A sequel that masterfully surpasses the original. Nathan Hale returns to fight bigger aliens on American soil and delivers on gameplay, guns and polish.

9 Pub Sony  
Dev Insomniac



9

Platformer

### Ratchet & Clank Tools Of Destruction

Platforming royalty return to save the galaxy. Exquisite graphics and a riotous arsenal of comedy weapons make this the pair's best interstellar outing yet.

9 Pub Sony  
Dev Insomniac



10

Music

### SingStar

Sony's much-loved karaoke game steps up to next-gen with a neater interface, online options and tons of tunes via SingStore. Outkast's Hey Ya and Killers' Mr Brightside are highlights.

9 Pub Sony  
Dev SCE Studios London

PS3  
Sci-fi



### Dead Space

Remember how mum said pulling the legs off spiders is wrong? It turns out using lasers to slice alien tentacles off is fine.



### Wall-E

Endless tidying up while being a bit sad about a girl seems less like a kids' game and more like our tell-all autobiography.



### Killzone 2

PS3 owners' new weapon of choice in the console wars is this visually astounding shooter sequel. Mmmm... lens flare.



### Lost Planet Extreme Condition

Think walking in a winter wonderland, when said wonderland is crawling with insectoid aliens and huge mechs.

# Team Choice



## Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

"News of the sequel prodded me into dusting off the original, and a year on it stands up brilliantly. It looks lush, the shooting's ace and Drake is still my favourite character on PS3. Sigh."

**Nathan Dittum**  
Reviews editor

### Power

Custom silicon harnesses crisp HD, ear-splitting audio, multi-processor might, and Blu-ray to deliver pure gaming perfection.

### Connectivity

USB slots to plug in your motion-sensing Sixaxis pads and many other devices.

### Online

Surf the net, message friends and download movies, music and expansion packs, plus demos and games from the PlayStation Store.



11

## Action-RPG Fallout 3

The natural successor to Oblivion's RPG throne plays out in a post-apocalyptic America with Liam Neeson as your AWOL dad. An epic adventure without the self-indulgent sprawl.

9 Pub Bethesda Softworks  
Dev Bethesda Game Studios



12

## Action Mirror's Edge

A real Marmite game. We loved it for the thrill of leaping across the glistening rooftops of a suspiciously perfect future city while pursued by trigger-happy cops. Idiots, meanwhile, didn't.

9 Pub EA  
Dev DICE

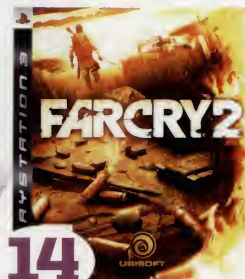


13

## Sports FIFA 09

Impressively strong core gameplay on the pitch, ten-on-ten online matches and a new multiseason Be A Pro mode make this the top-scoring football choice on PS3.

9 Pub EA  
Dev EA Canada



14

## Shooter Far Cry 2

Dry, dusty, African sandbox run-and-gun action with an ace level editor. Not only do you have to avoid the bullets in your hunt for arms dealer The Jackal, there's malaria to deal with, too.

9 Pub Ubisoft  
Dev Ubisoft Montreal

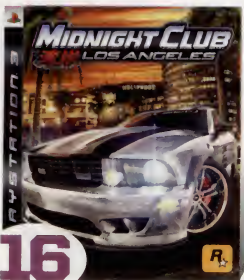


15

## Racer Race Driver Grid

Straight from the TOCA garage and into first place. Smooth mechanics, aggressive races and fine-tuned cars that make this the best racer yet on PS3.

9 Pub Codemasters  
Dev Codemasters



16

## Racer Midnight Club Los Angeles

Rockstar's street racer comes of age, rediscovering tuner culture's West Coast roots with a superb recreation of the City Of Angels and punchy car handling.

9 Pub Rockstar Games  
Dev Rockstar San Diego



17

## Music Guitar Hero World Tour

Bigger, better, rockier. Battles are out, the set list is super strong, drums and vocals mean you don't need to wait for Rock Band 2, plus there's a studio too!

9 Pub Activision  
Dev Neversoft

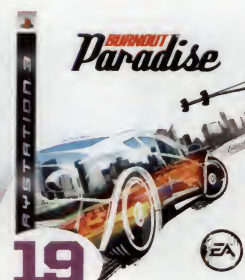


18

## Fighter Soulcalibur IV

Darth Vader aside, this is essential stuff. The swordplay is as accessible and strong as ever, with deep character customisation and online play completing the package.

9 Pub Ubisoft  
Dev Namco



19

## Racer Burnout Paradise

The ultra-fast crash-obsessed racer goes open-world with no menus and no lobbies – just a massive city packed with races, events and hidden routes. DLC content is making it even better.

9 Pub EA  
Dev Criterion Games



20

## Action Dead Space

Interstellar survival horror that robs from Bioshock, Resident Evil 4 and Event Horizon, but gets away with it thanks to looking beautiful, playing brilliantly and delivering some very big scares.

8 Pub EA  
Dev EA Redwood Shores



## Fracture

Roll boulders at your enemies to crush them! Call up giant spikes to impale them! Or just, you know, shoot them.



## Blacksite

Disowned by its own designer and ignored by everyone else, not even big aliens and mutagenic viruses could save this sci-fi slacker.



## Timeshift

The shooter that distilled all the possibilities inherent in a time-travelling suit down to 'shooting men in slow motion'.



## Enemy Territory Quake Wars

It's Strogg vs Humanity in this objective-focused, multiplayer-centric shooter.



## Resistance 2

Nathan Hale is like Obama with a laser rifle. (In the sense it's his job to save the world single-handed.)

# Hi-Def Directory

Ensure your PS3 games and Blu-ray movies look their best with a lovely new HDTV. Go on, you deserve it...

## Plasma Best buys



**£649\***  
**Panasonic TH-37PX80B**

Unusual to describe anything north of 500 sheets as incredible value – but this is, and if you're serious about HD it's a perfect way to get involved. Not 1080p, but at this size you won't notice, and for our money the picture quality shames its LCD rivals.

**Size 37" Native resolution 1,024 x 720 1080p** No  
**Connections** 3xHDMI, 1xComponent, 1xComposite, 1xS-Video, 2xSCART, 1xPC Input, Freeview



**£849**  
**Panasonic TH-42PZ80B**

Just a couple of years back you'd have been paying three large for a plasma this big, and without the ace picture Panasonic is now serving up. Best of all, it features built-in Freesat so you can watch HD content from the BBC and ITV.

**Size 42" Native resolution 1,920 x 1,080 1080p** Yes  
**Connections** 3xHDMI, 1xComponent, 1xComposite, 1xS-Video, 2xSCART, 1xPC Input, Freesat



**£1,749**  
**Pioneer PDP-LX5090**

We love Pio plasmas like Jesus loves sinners, and the Japanese firm's ninth-gen panel shames other HDTVs with its obsidian black levels, rich colours and sumptuous motion handling. Seriously, that Post Office *wants* to be robbed.

**Size 50" Native resolution 1,920 x 1,080 1080p** Yes  
**Connections** 3xHDMI, 1xComponent, 1xS-Video, 3xSCART, 1xPC Input, 1xUSB input

## LCD Best buys



**£330**  
**Samsung LE-26A456**

Perhaps overcompensating for its relative teeniness, this little Sammy punches way above its price point. Picture quality is competitive with models costing twice as much, and a trio of HDMI sockets means you're connected like a Russian mob.

**Size 26" Native resolution 1,366 x 768 1080p** No  
**Connections** 3xHDMI, 1xS-video, 1xComponent, 2xSCART, 1xPC Input, Integrated Freeview



**£581**  
**Sony KDL-32W4000**

There are cheaper sets available for less money and at bigger sizes, but this entry level Bravia won't be beaten on picture quality, and gives you the satisfaction of having all your kit Sony-badged. Even the menus are based on PS3's XMB.

**Size 32" Native resolution 1,920 x 1,080 1080p** Yes  
**Connections** 3xHDMI, 1xComponent, 1xComposite, 2xSCART, 1xS-video, 1xPC Input, 1xUSB input, Freeview



**£1,281**  
**Sony KDL-52W4000**

Desperate to give Uncle Sony some more shiny dollars? This superb Bravia will enrage your other half with its imperial-sized proportions, but at least you can claim the frame is elegant. Like the 2001 monolith. In your front room.

**Size 52" Native resolution 1,920 x 1,080 1080p** Yes  
**Connections** 3xHDMI, 1xComponent, 1xComposite, 2xSCART, 1xPC Input, 1xUSB input, Freeview

### Essential Blu-ray movies



#### Wall-E

Pixar proves it's still streets ahead with its latest CG epic – a gorgeous love story about the last rubbish-collecting robot on Earth.



#### The Dark Knight

The twisting 'order-versus-chaos' story is nothing short of operatic, while the action remains bone-break stern – and it looks astonishing in HD.



#### Hellboy 2

Bursting with colour and creatures dredged from the unspeakable imagination of director Guillermo del Toro.



## FAQ

### Do I need an HDTV to play PS3?

Simple answer: no. You can connect your PS3 to almost any standard definition TV using the composite lead supplied with the console. Do yourself a favour, though, and upgrade to a superior RGB SCART lead. However, to see PS3 games in all their glory, we massively recommend getting an HDTV. Don't even consider buying a flatscreen without the 'HD ready' badge, because it ensures you'll get the right sockets to hook up in hi-def.

### How does PS3 look on a normal TV?

Even in standard definition, the jump from PS2 to PS3 impresses. You were happy with how your PS2 looked through SCART on a normal TV, right? Assuming you're using the same setup, PS3 games look that much better because the machine is so much more powerful. More problematic is playing old games on an HDTV, because they have a lower resolution and the image therefore has to be upscaled and processed. The end result can be a smeared, blurry picture.

### 720p/1080i/1080p... WTF does it all mean?

These are the different flavours of hi-def signal. The numbers refer to the amount of horizontal lines in the picture; the more lines there are, the higher the detail. As for the letters, 'p' means a progressively scanned image, which is more stable and smooth because each frame is drawn in its entirety, whereas 'i' is an interlaced signal that rapidly switches between the odd and even horizontal lines of an image, giving the impression of a full frame. Roughly speaking, 720p is best for fast motion but 1080i suits more static, detailed visuals, with 1080p therefore being the best of both worlds and ultimate daddy.

### Do I need a 1080p compatible set?

Not necessarily. Although more and more HDTVs are capable of displaying 1080p, games that support the signal, such as Wipeout HD and Gran Turismo 5 Prologue, remain in the minority. However, there's an argument to say that for anything less than super-sized screens (say, below 46") the difference between 720p and 1080p is actually pretty negligible – and certainly nowhere near the quantum shift you get going from standard to hi-def.

### Should I buy an LCD or plasma?

The variation in quality between models and manufacturers means there's no easy answer. LCD screens tend to have higher resolutions (good news if you're after 1080p), are lightweight and cost less at larger screen sizes. However, the blacks can look



slightly washed out and some LCD panels struggle with fast motion. Plasma, contrastingly, deals with motion confidently and delivers rich black and vibrant colours – but the sets are chunkier and guzzle power. There's also a slight risk of screen burn, when on-screen information (such as an energy bar) remains as an afterimage, although the problem isn't usually permanent. Forced to choose? We'd probably plump for a 42" Pioneer or Panasonic plasma. But if you're paying we'll have a 46" Bravia X-series LCD.

### How big should my TV be?

Big is always best. You also need to consider the size of your room and budget, though. The size of flat-panel screens mean you'll want to sit further back than you did with your old TV. As a rough measurement, multiply the diagonal size of the screen by three and it will give you an idea of how far away to plonk the La-Z-Boy. So for a 42" screen you should sit it about 10ft back.

### How do I make my PS3 run hi-def?

Connect any HDMI cable between your PS3 and your HDTV and the console will automatically recognise it and ask if you want to display hi-def. Say yes, obviously. It should also check the maximum resolution your panel supports, but this can also be tweaked in the display settings menu on the XMB. If you're connecting via Component you'll also need to go into the same menu and select that option under Display Settings, after which you'll be asked to choose which HD resolution to use.

### Help, the screen has gone blank!

Assuming everything's on and all the leads are connected, you've probably selected the wrong resolution. Switch the unit to standby and then turn it on by holding the power button for five seconds until you hear a bleep. If an HDMI lead is plugged in, the PS3 will detect it. Otherwise it'll revert to the standard AV output using a composite lead.

## Getting connected

You've got the hardware, now hook it all up

### HDMI

Transmits hi-def video and audio as a pure digital signal – the best possible connection. These don't come with PS3 and will set you back around £20.



### Component

These cables deliver an analogue signal capable of carrying hi-def video. Three separate wires are used for the red, green and blue picture information.



### RGB/SCART

This is used for the standard audiovisual connection. It's analogue-only, but provides a crisp and clear picture that will serve you well. It won't deliver that hi-def crispness though.



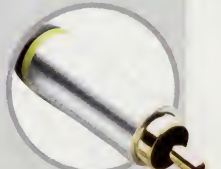
### S-Video

This splits the analogue video signal into chrominance (colour) and luminance (light), resulting in a better picture compared with a standard composite lead.



### Composite

Bog-standard analogue signal. Picture quality is fuzzy and prone to colour bleed. It's also the lead you get in the PS3 box. Cheers! Do yourself a favour: upgrade immediately.

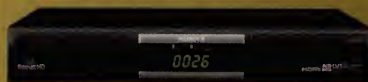


### Optical

This is a laser-powered, audio-only connection used to send digital sound to your TV or home cinema amp for deep bass and crystal-clear effects.



## HD choice



### Humax HD Freesat box

Over 130 channels with no subscription, and because it's a satellite signal there's enough bandwidth for hi-def content. Unfortunately, at present that only means BBC HD and ITV's near non-existent contribution.

Price £140.25 Channels 130+ Stockist amazon.co.uk Resolution 1080i, 720p, 576p, 576i Website humaxdigital.com



### No Country For Old Men

Drug money, determinism vs freewill and preposterous hair in the Coens' neo-Western.



### The Matrix Trilogy

The first one's still amazing, but even the barked sequels are worth a revisit in shiny 1080p.



### The Godfather Trilogy

The third one (boo!) still hasn't improved, but parts I and II are proper '70s masterpieces.



### There Will Be Blood

A huge performance from Daniel Day-Lewis anchors this dark, unsettling oil epic. Large on ideas, small on sentiment, and beautiful to look at.

# Nathan Drake

## At last, something for the ladies

A decent haircut, a visit to Gap, slightly higher cheekbones and a vague ancestral link to Sir Frances Drake and it could be *you* exploring the lost city of El Dorado on the quest for Frannie's final secret. That's the appeal. Despite having no specialist training Nate can rescue chicks from jail, fend off monsters, uncover lost treasures and still find time to sail off into the sunset with the girl *and* the gold. Swoon, eh?

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## Cooliest moments

### Final showdown

The climactic shoot-out takes place on a boat between Drake, Navarro – think a Spanish Hans Gruber – and enough hired goons to have a convention. It's a gripping boss battle that finishes with a chunky punch-up. The perfect payoff.



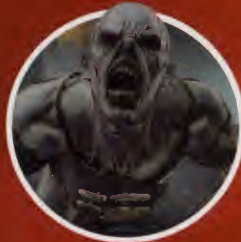
### Sanctuary

Safe to say that one place Nate won't be going in a future adventure is heaven – not after trading gunfire and slinging grenades around this monastery. Was picking enemies off while peering over pews worth an eternity in a lake of fire? In a word: yes.



### Hola, boys

Just when you think Drake's about to get his hands on the treasure and vanquish rival Eddy into the bargain, Spaniards who've been warped by the treasure rise up and attack. It's a direct rip from horror movie *The Descent* and also an absolute humdinger of a twist.



### Trapped

In the remains of a once opulent hall, mercenaries attack from all angles. Turrets fire incessantly, grenades land around your feet like coconuts in a storm, and all the while you desperately duck behind cover and sprint around picking up ammo. PS3 gameplay at its best.



## Essential skills

### Traversing walls

Clambering up vines, clinging to broken bits of wall and leaping from ledge to ledge, 100ft above rocks and ocean. Suddenly Lara Croft seems like a shaky Victorian spinster.



### Melee combat

Barely used because the design forces you to go all guns blazing half the time, but still fulfilling and convincing. Especially the sleeper hold. "Nighty-night!"



### Drive 'n' shoot

Shamelessly "inspired" by the chase in the first *Indy*, but we don't care – after all, who hasn't wanted to blow up a chasing pack of enemy vehicles while hanging off the back of a jeep?



### Riding jet-skis

The handling's woolly, but it offers a new spin on the 'exploding barrel' cliché – and picking off men while speeding up a river with a fit lass in tow is undeniably fun.



## Friends and foes

### Victor Sullivan

Better known as Sully, he's Drake's cigar-sucking pal who you see 'killed' early on, only to later discover he's helping the bad guys – but wait, he's taking them down from within! Remains a cult hero in these parts.



### Elena Fisher

Super-inquisitive journalist (and, inevitably, love interest) who's equally a dab hand with a 9mm as a video camera. A sneaky game-ending snog with Nate is spoiled by Sully arriving with a boatful of gold.



### Gabriel Roman

Predictably English and villainous rival treasure hunter who, after inhaling dust from the treasure – the Mummy of El Dorado's corpse – is shot dead by his own lieutenant.



### Ataq Navarro

The real bad guy. Double crosses and kills cohort Roman, thereby exposing his own plan to sell the curse of El Dorado as a weapon. Meets his maker on the ocean floor after being defeated by Drake on his own ship.



### Eddy Raja

Another old rival of Drake's, who is leading a band of pirates on his own quest to find El Dorado's secrets. Eventually killed at – ironically – Drake's side, as they fight together against the mutant Spaniards.

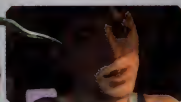
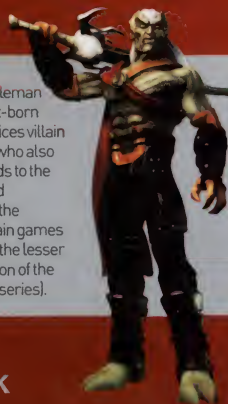


## Drake trivia



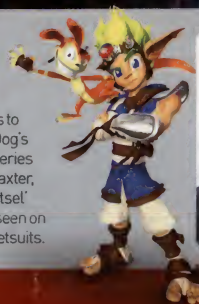
Naughty Dog's internal codename for the game that eventually became *Uncharted* was quite simply 'Big'.

Simon Templeman is the Sussex-born actor who voices villain Roman and who also lent his chords to the vampiric lead character in the *Legacy Of Kain* games (which were the lesser known relation of the *Soul Reaver* series).



In the first videos Elena was a brunette, before she dug out the bleach because Naughty Dog "preferred her blonde". Did they do collar and cuffs?

Drake's Fortune features several references to Naughty Dog's other big series *Jak And Daxter*, like the 'Ottsel' branding seen on Drake's wetsuits.



Arad Productions is working with a division of Sony on an *Uncharted* film that'll explore modern day piracy in South America. "Drake's not a great guy," says boss Avi Arad. Wait, what?



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